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DRAMATIC  
THE EVOLUTION OF THE PROLOGUE

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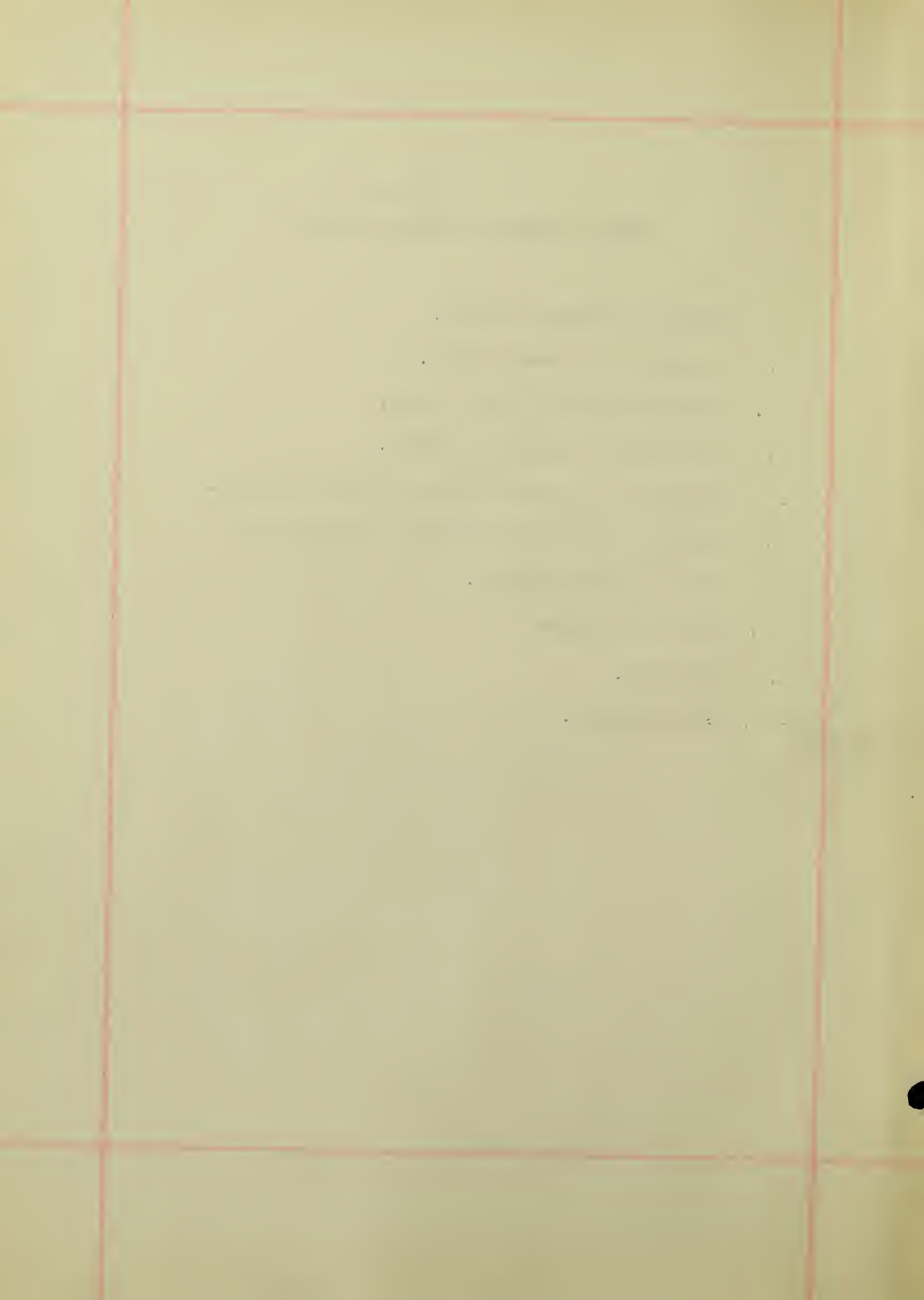
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*Dramatic*  
The Evolution of the Prologue

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DRAMATIC  
THE EVOLUTION OF THE PROLOGUE.

I.

Origin in Greek Tragedy.

In groping back into the mists of antiquity, where the wraith of fact is indistinguishable from the wraith of legend, we encounter difficulties that may not be solved by rule of thumb. The origin of what are to-day the most familiar objects of our households, the most incontrovertible facts of existence, become as illusive and intangible as the veriest <sup>faery</sup> of the woodlands.

Especially is this true when one seeks the beginnings of so small and Janus-faced a form as the dramatic prologue, that prodigal son of Drama, the eldest, yet most wayward of her children, never growing beyond its first dwarf-like proportions, yet as varicolored in its functions and adaptations as a chameleon in a flower-bed. Drama itself in its first days was largely conjectural. The history of Arion, inventor of the dithyramb, is inextricably bound up with the legend of Arion, whom the dolphins carried on their backs to Mount Taenarum. Thespis is scarcely more than



a mythical being. Aeschylus alone, out of all the figures that strive to emerge from the fog of mythogenesis, stands forth as a living human-being, divested of the cloud robes of duty. Even Aeschylus, as Victor Hugo tells us, is up to his shoulders in the ashes of ages, his head alone remaining above the earth, but "with his head alone, he is as immense as all the neighboring gods standing on their pedestals."

For our data, then, we must go to sources as scattered as sibylline leaves and almost as unstable. From the old fragmentary tragedies themselves, we get our most illuminating suggestions, but we possess not even fragments earlier than Aeschylus. In the works of the first great tragic writers, we find isolated references to earlier plays, a few transcriptions from them and structural evidence of already established conventions. From the works of the grammarian, Evanthius, and those of Themistius, we get helpful clues, which the Poetics of Aristotle and his Rhetoric prove, as they do for so many other inquiries, the most bountiful source.

After the great festival week of song and play, the archon of Athens was wont to draw up a report of





the proceedings which was deposited in the city archives. Aristotle had recourse to these documents and, since the originals have long disappeared, the information we get from his commentaries, is doubly valuable.

The normal Greek play in its earliest perfected form was composed - quantitatively, as Aristotle says - "of the Prologos, Episode, Exodos, Choral element; the last being divided into Parados and Stasimon." The order of procedure was Prologos; Parados, the song sung by the chorus while entering the orchestra; First Episode, the first dialogue of the actors after the entrance of the chorus; First Stasimon, the choral song sung by the chorus at the first station; Second Episode, the second body of dialogue after the chorus; Second Stasimon, choral song at the second station; Third Episode, third body of dialogue; Third Stasimon, choral song at the third station, and Exodos, all that follows the last chorus.

"The Prologos", says Aristotle in his Poetics,\* "is that entire part of a tragedy which precedes the Parados of the chorus." In studying the earliest tragedies, we observe that the "entire" part that precedes the entrance of the chorus is much more comprehensive

\* Poetics, XII, 2., Butcher Ed.





than the prefatory speech prefixed to Elizabethan dramas with which we have come to associate the term. It is more nearly the "prologuial act" so called of Boucicault, which "put the audience in possession of events antecedent to the real subject of the drama."

Aristotle goes into greater detail on the subject in his Rhetoric. He compares the prologue of a play to the "exordium" in epic poetry which was to give the reader a clue to the argument. "So too,"\* he says, "the tragic poets explain the subjects of their dramas, if not at the opening, like Euripides, yet somewhere or other in the prologue, as Sophocles himself in the lines beginning 'My sire was Polybus,' and the same is true of comedy. The most essential function then or characteristic of the exordium is to explain the end or object of the speech; hence if the subject is itself clear and unimportant there is no need of employing an exordium."

There is a hint of the direct appeal to the audience which later came into common usage in a farther passage by Aristotle: "It is evident, however, that such tricks as I have described are addressed to the audience, i. e. not as impartial and unemotional hear-

\* Aristotle, Rhetoric, p.  
Weldon Edition.



ers of the facts; for it is the universal practice of orators to use their exordia as means of creating a prejudice against their adversaries or of removing apprehensions entertained in regard to themselves. Let me instance the prologue beginning 'My lord, I will not say how hastily', or the interruption of Thoas, 'Why all this preluding?''.

He compares the dramatists with their "tricky" prologues to "the servants" who are accused of doing wrong, never give a direct answer to the questions but beat about the bush and make long prefaces before they come to the point."

The range in treatment and length given to the prologue by this definition of Aristotle invalidates the theory held by Dacier that, by "Prologos", Aristotle meant what was afterwards called the parabasis, which occurred indifferently in any part of the play. Mahaffy<sup>\*</sup> remarks that while the prologues may have originally served as arguments in the written copies of the plays, "for stage purposes their recital by some indifferent actor may have been to fill up time while the Athenian audience were bustling in and taking their seats." This is hardly credible. The performances at Athens

\* Mahaffy, Classical Greek Literature.





were yearly events, looked forward to eagerly. The spectators were not liable to be tardy in assembling; more likely, they came, as Dicaeopolis in the Acharnians, by daybreak ~~in the morning~~ or joined the early crowd that did "jostle each other for the first seat rushing down in a body." However that may be, the Grecian prologue was too integral a part of the body of the tragedy to have been ~~written~~ <sup>written</sup>, as ~~has been~~ in maid-and-feather-duster periods, to seat a late audience, or as in the Loas of Spanish plays to pacify the groundlings while awaiting the grandees.

It is not illogical to reason that the prologue began with the first spoken drama. The early choral dramas of the sixth century were lyrical in form and started naturally with song, but, when Thespis made of the leader of the chorus an actor and interspersed choral songs with soliloquy and dialogue, he started his play with a narrative which was followed by the chorus. Haigh, \* in writing of the play-structure, states that "the first scene was called the prologue and its invention is ascribed to Thespis."

In Evanthius de Comvedia, we read "sed primo una persona est subducta cantoribus, quae repondens

\* Haigh, Tragic Drama of the Greek.



*ἀποβαίως* id est alternis choro locupletavit variavit-  
que ~~ram~~<sup>e</sup> musicam." Themistius (Or. 26, 316 D) speaks  
of a Thespian drama, consisting of a "prologue", pre-  
ceding the speeches addressed to the chorus or the  
dialogues between the actor and the chorus. Ascherson  
(l.c. p. 428) contends that Thespis could have had  
nothing to do with the invention of a prologue, both  
because the opening choral ode could give the neces-  
sary information and, more especially, because the two  
earliest tragedies extant, the Suppliants and the  
Persians of Aeschylus, began directly with the choral  
procession and had nothing corresponding to the pro-  
logue. From this he deduces the theory, that, when  
Aeschylus in his third tragedy employs the form, it  
is a direct invention.

The balance of authority seems to incline to  
the opinion that the prologue came into being with the  
first actor of Thespis, but, whether these prologues  
were in the form of soliloquies or dialogues that intro-  
duced the story, or were of the formal cut of those  
used by Euripides, we have no method of ascertaining,  
for there are no specimens remaining. Bergk<sup>\*</sup> believes  
that Euripides, less of an artist than Aeschylus, re-

\* Bergk, Griech Literature, p.393.





verted to an old form, probably that of Thespis, but he is practically alone in this view as the consensus of opinion is that given in the Vita (page 12, Dindorf) where it is expressly stated that the Formal Prologue is an invention of Euripides.

In turning to a consideration of the prologues themselves, we encounter another difficulty. We can not be sure that the printed form, as it has come down to us, is the work of the dramatist himself, because the manuscripts have been so tampered with since the author's times. Euripides' tragedies were played all over the Hellenistic world years after the dramatist's death and some of the matter expounded in them is accounted for when we know that they were written for barbarian audiences to whom the facts had to be imparted. Thus, Prof. Murray points out that the long prologue to *Electra* is undoubtedly an interpolation because the themes set forth at length were such as must have been known to every Athenian audience. Another commentator remarks on the "un-Sophoclean" character of the soliloquy in the *Trachinian Woman*, remarking that it might be a collaboration for "even in those days there were schools of Dramatic Art", or it might



have been an instance "when the tragedian worked below his usual level."

In turning from suppositional matter to data at hand, we open the Suppliants of Aeschylus, the oldest extant play and find that it is devoid of a prologue. It begins with the entrance of the chorus, the daughters of Danaos, in the role of suppliants. An examination of the play reveals two very excellent reasons for the omission of the prologue. First, the legend is one familiar to every Greek household; second, it is of an uncomplicated nature, having only one phase revealed in one striking situation. Familiarity with the story and simplicity of plot obviated the necessity of a foreword. Aristotle himself said "if the subject is itself clear and unimportant, there is no need of employing an exordium." The same explanation is applicable to the Persians, the second drama, constructed likewise without the prologue. The tragedy is founded upon the Persian War and was produced only seven years after its termination while the happenings were yet fresh in the minds of the Greeks.

In the remaining five plays - there are only seven dramas of Aeschylus extant - the opening scene





is in the nature of a prologue, simple and archaic in character, consisting in three instances of a soliloquy and in only one play, the *Choëphoroi*, is it spoken by the chief actor. In the *Choëphoroi*, it is recited by Orestes and, as preserved to us, is only twelve lines in length. In each case, however, it is spoken by one of the characters of the play and never, as in later productions, by some one especially appointed for the recitation and having no connection with the plot.

The prologue of *Agamemnon* consists of a soliloquy by the Watchman, who prays the gods for relief and for an answer to his prayers. For ten years, he tells us, has he stood exposed to the cold night-dews, has studied the stars in their changeful course above him, awaiting in vain a signal: he grieves, in solitude, over the corruption in the royal family. At this moment the wished-for sign flashes forth and he rushes away to impart the news to his mistress, as a chorus of old men appear. A prayer, likewise, opens the *Eumenides*. A Pythian prophetess who presides over the oracle, begins thus: "First, with this prayer, I worship of the gods."

The *Seven against Thebes* opens with an address by *Eleocles* to the burghers (not in the role of chorus)



followed by the message of the Scout to Eleocles, and a prayer by the latter, all delivered before the entrance of the chorus. Prometheus Bound commences directly with a dialogue, the method adopted by Sophocles. In the Prometheus, it is between Strength and Hephaestos, with the chief character, Prometheus, present, though silent.

Aeschylus, a supreme artist, conceived his dramas as a whole, so that his prologues have none of the disjointed character of the later writers, but are the natural resources for expounding the first situation and lead in a skilful manner to the body of the drama. The meter is usually iambic trimeter. Haigh remarks that as the Thespian drama was an outgrowth of the dithyramb we are prone to believe that the early plays were chiefly in the trochaic tetrameter, but, finding the iambic trimeter <sup>in use</sup> only forty years after his death, we accept the plausible conclusion that he used either as he chose. On this subject, we have Aristotle's statement in his Poetics III, 2; "The writers of Tragedies have ceased to use the poetic style as once they did, and that, as they passed from the tetrameter to the iambic measure as being the metre which bears the





closest resemblance to prose, so too they have abandoned all such words as depart from the usage of ordinary conversation."

It is the path-makers of history who must struggle against the greatest obstacles, and the titanic nature of their struggles renders them the nobler. Aeschylus hewed out the path for Sophocles, a lesser poet, a greater craftsman. Sophocles lived in the period of his country's highest prosperity. He found ready-made to his hand a congenial form for the expression of his talents. The first period of his development, <sup>\*</sup>Plutarch points out for us, was in imitation of the magneloquence of Aeschylus. In the second, experimenting, feeling his way, he came "to his own harsh and artificial period of style." In the third period, he found himself, and developed an artistic simplicity and ease, combined with real constrictive ability. Nothing can be finer than the climatic sweep of Oedipus Tyrannus toward the catastrophe. And the prologue of this tragedy, while giving the audience information that is essential to the comprehension of the subsequent unfoldment, is a little drama in itself, in which, in a compass of a hundred and fifty<sup>+</sup>

\* De Profect, Virt. 7.



lines, is revealed character drawing, action, suspense and climax. Oedipus appears at the palace gate and graciously receives the suppliants, assuring them of his care and watchfulness and telling them that he has sent to the oracle of Delphi for a message for them. Even as he speaks the messenger from Apollo returns with the fateful decree that plunges us at once in the heart of the story and creates the suspense, that lasts until the final line of the Exodus.

In six out of the seven extant plays of Sophocles, the prologue consists of dialogue. In the *Trachiniae*, it is almost entirely a soliloquy by Deianira. In *Electra*, it is from the conversation between Orestes and the Old Man that the audience receives the necessary information. In *Oedipus Coloneus*, this is imparted through the questioning by the blind man and his daughter, Antigone, of the Colonean, who precedes the chorus and warns them away from sacred ground. In *Antigone*, it is the heroine who comes in with her sister, Ismene, and declares her resolution to bestow the rites of burial on her two dead brothers despite the edict to the contrary, a circumstance upon which the whole plot hinges. *Ajax* and *Philoctetes* are





each introduced by dialogues which prepare for the interest in the central figure; in the first play, it is carried on between Ulysses and Minerva; in the second, between Ulysses and Neoptolemus.

So organic a part of the whole were the ~~pro-~~<sup>\*</sup>prologues, that Prof. Mills basing his definition of prologue on the Euripidean models remarks that "Aeschylus prefixed prologues to but few of his plays, Sophocles to none." We find in more than one history of Drama, the statement that Euripides "invented the prologue". Euripides, if we accept, as we started out to do, Aristotle's definition, did not invent the form, but he employed it in a distinctly different method from that practiced by his two great predecessors. He accepts it as a convenient formula; he sees in it not only a medium for giving his audience clues to his plot, but an instrument for his "ironic rationalism". Once he inherited it as a dramatic convention, it suggested further advantages.

The opening speech of the priestess in Eumenides is partly a prayer and partly a soliloquy, while Deianira, at the beginning of the Trachiniae, addresses the nurse, not the spectator. Euripides was the first, then,

\* A. Mills, - Poets and Poetry of Ancient Greece.



to commence his plays with a speech "that had no dramatic usefulness apart from the convenience of the audience." The prologues suffer when compared with the miniature dramas by which Sophocles prepared his audience. Müller, in his *Literature of Ancient Greece*, contends that the prologue was chosen by Euripides as "the speediest way of getting through dull preliminary details" so that he might plunge to the crises, but his frequent insertion of relatively unimportant dialogue after the prologue, would make such a view untenable. Schlegel considers that the author's purpose was to explain those vital modifications in the legend which Euripides was fond of making, while Haigh puts forth the theory that the adoption of this special form came from a general desire for clearness of exposition and from its recommendation of novelty, which to a poet like Euripides, who was often compelled to rework old subjects, would have special appeal.

The cause is probably to be found in a synthesis of these reasons. The Greeks had no play-bills and a study of Euripides' treatment of familiar legends reveals the need of some such exposition as Schlegel





suggests. Euripides came at a time when traditional mythology was losing hold on the more intelligent minds. The legends were less credited than formerly and there were more variations in their interpretation; hence, it was necessary that the dramatist should inform his audience which phase of the subject he treated. He must state the exact point at which he means to pick up his characters. Already it was becoming difficult to find in the original stories, new situations, and Euripides in his rhetorical prologue gave the volatile, novelty-loving nature of the Athenian, variety in construction as well as in plot.

Like all innovators and iconoclasts, Euripides was the best-hated man in his country. It is the moderns to whom he is

"Our Euripides, the human,  
With his droppings of warm tears,  
And his touches of things common  
Till they rose to touch the spheres."

To the ancients, he was the upstart who dared tamper with conventions, sanctified by the hand of Aeschylus and Sophocles, who banished the heroic figures of his predecessors and brought real men and women to the boards and, lastly, directed a moral that pointed un-



comfortably downwards toward the audience instead of upwards towards the gods.

The principal objection to the prologues of Euripides is not that they told too much of the plot, for with Aeschylus a knowledge of the whole plot is presupposed, nor yet that it is a "clumsily-contrived method of bringing about the catastrophe which ought, according to all the rules and precedents of classic art, to have been brought about by the regular and natural action of the play itself;" it is the more general and deep-rooted objection that the method itself smacks of mechanism and, so, is inartistic.

In the Frogs, Aristophanes indulges in a bitter satire against Euripides. Dionysus goes to Hades where he finds a dispute going on as to who shall be adjudged the greatest poet. Aeschylus complains that "down there", he and Euripides do not meet on equal terms. "Why not?" asks Dionysus. Aeschylus replies:

"My poetry survived me; his died with him;  
He's got it here, all ready to recite."

Euripides turns to the subject of prologues, supposed to be his hobby, and says:





"Well then I'll turn me to your prologues now.  
Beginning first to test the first beginning  
Of this fine poet's plays. Why he's obscure  
Even in the Enunciation of facts."

Clarity was a quality upon which Euripides justly prided himself. Aeschylus, then, indulges in a caustic <sup>arrangement</sup> of Euripides' faults in style, diction and subject-matter after which he has the plays weighed in a shop-keeper's scales - "the art poetic like a pound of cheese" - and they are found wanting.

A collection of the dramas of Euripides consists of eighteen tragedies and fragments. The prologue of each is a stately narrative, a transition between the dialogue form of Sophocles which was an organic part of the play and the later prologue of the Romans and of the Elizabethans which was intentionally separated from the rest of the drama and spoken by an actor in his own person. With Euripides, it is either by one of characters or by some god or spirit interested in the course of the action. In seven of the plays, it is a supernatural being who speaks the prologue; Hermes in Ion, Poseidon in Troades, Dionysus in Bacchae, Aphrodite in Hippolytus, Apollo in Alcestris, Silenus in Cyclops and Polydorus in Hecuba.



In seven others it is spoken by the leading character in the role they are to assume in the play. We have it given by Helen in *Helena*, by Andromache in *Andromache*, by Iolans in *Heracleidae*, by Jocasta in *Phoenissae*, by Electra in *Orestes*, by Iphigeneia in *Iphigeneia in Taurus* and by Amphityron in *Hercules Furens*. A subordinate character speaks it in three; Aethra in *The Suppliants*, a nurse in *Medea* and a husbandman in *Electra*.

This attempt to preserve dramatic illusion by a partial connection through character did not succeed in doing away with the didactic purpose of the author, and when the prologues appeal by their genuine emotional value, as in *Medea*, it is despite this mechanism. The skill with which Euripides transcribes his story from the legendary past ~~with the visualated present~~ is truly remarkable. He is at once an artist and a poet. The interest and complexity of his opening situations were increased by the presence of a third actor whom he introduces for the first time.

The usual form employed by Euripides is an introductory soliloquy followed by a dialogue. *Iphigeneia in Aulis* begins with a dialogue. The prologue to

In some cases it is found that the following  
is the case: that the subject is a man  
of about 30 years of age, of average height and  
weight, of light complexion, and with the hair  
black, or brown in color, or possibly to red-  
dish in color, and the eyes are of various colors.  
The complexion is usually fair, or light, or  
the subject is a man of about 30 years of age,  
of average height and weight, of light complexion,  
and with the hair black, or brown in color, or  
possibly to reddish in color, and the eyes are  
of various colors.

This subject is a man of about 30 years of age,  
of average height and weight, of light complexion,  
and with the hair black, or brown in color, or  
possibly to reddish in color, and the eyes are  
of various colors. The subject is a man of about  
30 years of age, of average height and weight,  
of light complexion, and with the hair black,  
or brown in color, or possibly to reddish in  
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of light complexion, and with the hair black,  
or brown in color, or possibly to reddish in  
color, and the eyes are of various colors.



Helena is one of the longest in Greek drama. This arose from the fact that in this play Euripides treated a legend from an essentially unfamiliar viewpoint, which had to be made clear to the spectators. To do this he employs a soliloquy by Helen of eighty-eight lines, a dialogue between Helen and Teucer as long again, a second, shorter soliloquy and an ode to introduce the chorus.

The recitation of some of Euripides' prologues was said to tax the skill of the actor. By this time, however, the actors had made of their art a profession. Before the period of Aeschylus, it was the poet himself who took the chief part, reciting his own prologues and leading his choruses. Naigh states "It is expressly said that Thespis was 'himself acting, according to ancient custom', at that performance which excited the disapproval of Solon." Aeschylus is known to have acted in his own plays, but is thought to have abandoned the stage on the introduction of a second actor. A weakness of the voice prevented the participation of Sophocles and at the period at which Euripides flourished the office had been turned over to a representative. Plutarch<sup>\*</sup> gives us an account of how Euripides

\* Plut. De Audiendo, 46 B.



trained his choruses, singing the odes to them himself.

Euripides' influence was more far-reaching than that of any of his predecessors or contemporaries. Greek comedies, which now came into being, were modeled on his tragedies. The Roman plays were servile copies of the New Comedy form and, from the Romans, the English, who read Latin more readily than Greek, imported Seneca, ~~Seneca~~<sup>a</sup>, Plut<sup>a</sup>us and Terence whom they flattered by generous imitation.





## II.

Prologue in Greek Comedy.

Comedy was not an off-spring of Tragedy. As the latter sprang into being at the festival of Dionysus, around the altar to that god, so too, the comedy seems to have had its origin in a season of celebration, this time the vintage-festival of the villages. The reception of the new-born progeny was, however, very different. Behold, here was a creature of mirth claiming the same distinction accorded the mourners. The acceptance became such a momentous question that the oracle of Delphi was consulted. The answer from Apollo read, "Poetry has two ears." Aristotle laments the obscurity of the response. Hugo exclaims over its illumination, "Poetry", says he, "has two ears, one which listens to life, the other to death."

It was not, however, until 465 B.C.\* that recognition was publicly accorded to the revel-band, the "komoi", and that "komoidia" could be recognized along side of "tragoidia". The first comic writer whose works have been preserved to us is Aristophanes, "a Bacchus foaming at the lips", a "he-goat with its philosopher's beard." His plays, though classed with

\* Murray, - Ancient Greek Literature.



comedy can not be accepted as examples of a pure form but are rather lyrical-burlesques, witty, sprawling, formless hybrids. He laughs as bitterly as Rabelais. In the *Frogs*, he mocks the prologues of Euripides; yet his own are long and as disjointed as the other parts of his plays, <sup>though</sup> ~~yet~~ they are permeated with a humor so universal and perennial that it <sup>is</sup> modern. The plays preserved to us are, all furnished with prologues. These bear a closer relation to the prologues of Sophocles than to those of Euripides, because they are always an organic part of the fantastic whole; they are spoken by characters in the play and are addressed to other characters and not at the audience. Usually the beginning is a dialogue, as in *The Knights*, *The Wasps*, *Peace*, *The Frogs*, but he employs soliloquy when he wishes, as in *The Clouds*, *The Archarnians* or the *Ecclesiazusae*.

In many editions of the English translations of Aristophanes, we find his plays divided into scenes, his prologue - in the Aristotlean sense - exactly corresponding with Scene I. This, however, is an arbitrary division unwarranted by any feature of the structure or thought in the play itself. The prologues do cor-





respond to our later prologuial acts, but there is in most cases a direct connection between the last speeches of the prologue and the first of the chorus. Socrates in the *Clouds* summons the chorus of clouds thus:

"Keep silent then, and listen to a prayer,  
Which fits the gravity of age to hear -  
Oh! Air, all powerful Air, which dost enfold  
This pendant globe, Thou vault of flaming gold,  
Ye sacred clouds, who bid the thunder roll,  
Shine forth, approach, and cheer your suppliant's soul!"

In the *Birds* and the *Wasps*, the approach of the chorus is commented upon by the actors then on the stage. In the former, Pisthetairus exclaims, "O Neptune! Do you not see how great a plague of birds is collected together?" In the *Wasps*, Sosias, noting the approach of the swarm, arms himself with "stone, flint and pebble", while Bdelycleon warns him, "Have a care what you do; they're a sharp angry crew, quick as wasp's nest, when urchin molest it."

The *Archani*ans of Aristophanes is our oldest extant comedy, if we admit the classification, dating



from 425 B. C. Examining the prologue, we find that it consists of a soliloquy by Dicacopolis, the principal character in the play, and this is followed by dialogue. The soliloquy contains no setting-forth of plot, but is a rambling monologue marked by the satire of which Aristophanes was master. Dicaeopolis is represented as seated alone in the place of Assembly, having risen early to get a good seat. He is a demi-god, descendant from Ceres, as he tells the Herald, yet, when after the Magistrates arrive and begin wrangling, he offers his services as a mediator, the old adage is proved that "if a deity were to come down among the Athenians and propose to conclude a peace for them, they would not listen to him", and he narrowly escapes imprisonment. Next the ambassadors and foreign envoys appear and we are well launched into the story when the chorus and semi-chorus enter.

Another feature of the prologues of Aristophanes, discerned now for the first time, is that besides starting the suspense, they explain the "disguises". The very nature of his plays, growing out of the chorus of satyrs and maskers, creates this new demand. He lets us know, through the dialogue of Socrates and **Strepsiades**, the





allegorical character of his chorus of clouds. "It is", says Cumberland, "the reply of sophistry to common sense, which had struck upon the truth in a very natural solution of their properties, supposing them to be fog and vapour." So too in *Frogs*, *Birds*, and *Wasps*, Aristophanes has chosen his disguises to caricature some prevailing custom or evil. His reforming is what Bergson calls a "social gesture", rather than pamphleteering preachment.

We have another departure from the old dramatic forms in the appearance of the Parabasis. Our records of the very earliest vintage festivals give, as one of their dearly prized characteristics, the liberty of free-speech, or "parrhesia". One could mock and parody the highest official without fear of retaliation. When the riotous chorus acquired a leader, this parrhesia evolved into a topical song addressed to the public and this, in turn, grew into the parabasis of full-grown comedy. In Aristophanes, we discover it as an address by the chorus, or the leader, in the poet's name without any relevance to the plot of the play. The Parabasis of the *Birds* is perhaps an exception to this as it contains the well-known parable of Night and the



wind-egg which is related to the theme, if not the action, of the plot. The parabasis of Peace is divided into two parts; the first, not containing the legitimate parts of the usual form, such as the two "Addresses" or the "Commotion" is rounded out in the second half.

When we study the topics treated by the parabasis, we will instantly recognize its kinship to the later prologue. In the specimens we have in the plays of Aristophanes, we find him commending or excusing his wares, attacking the claims of his rivals, discussing subjects of civic welfare, advancing droll theories of government and giving us incidently valuable items concerning the customs of the day, the life of the people and the history of comedy. Especially precious in this latter regard is the parabasis of the *Clouds*. He flatters his audience, "Most clever spectators", says he. He arraigns them in the *Wasps*, "But now, O people, give your attention, if you love anything true; for now the poet desires to censure the spectators." In a word, the poet steps out of the wings into the picture and speaks in person or by delegate to the crowd before him. While this act, directly at variance with the essence of dramatic repre-





sensation, is in that light a fault, coming as it did in the course of a disjointed comic presentation, it was less obviously reprehensible than when attempted in a serious production.

Our especial concern with the parabasis is that by the time of the appearance of the New Comedy, represented by Menander, it had become absorbed by the prologue itself, which latter, retaining its former introductory characters to the plot, took unto itself marks of the parabasis, notably the direct appeal to the audience. Unfortunately, there is extant no play of Menander, who, from all accounts of his time and the flattery of his imitators, was the greatest of the comic writers. His plays, from what evidence we can thus deduce, were admirable forerunners of our modern type of comedy of manners. They marked a distinct advance in technique, the chorus was discarded as so much extraneous finery and the prologue and parabasis, wedded and inseparable, occupied the place of introduction to the comedy and were evidently a transitional stage to the detached forms of the Roman Comedy. Our best method of dealing with Menander resolves itself then into a study of the Roman drama which he so largely influenced and to this we will now turn.



## III.

Prologue on the Roman Stage.

The Roman Tragedy, represented by Seneca, can be summarily dismissed. The prologue, as we find it in the Latin poet's works, is primarily an imitation of Euripides and the later Greek tragic authors. The form with him shows, perhaps, a greater elaboration and is marked by mastery of language, but it develops no new features, few if any new situations, is retrogressive rather than progressive in development. The prologue, as in Greek tragedy, is spoken by a character in the play or a deity or ghost interested in its outcome. The Senecan ghost, appearing in his *Thyestes*, in *Agamemnon* and other plays, though a descendant from the shade of Polydore in Euripides' *Hecuba*, is the legitimate forebear of the many diaphonous beings who stalked the English boards in the sixteenth century.

When we turn to the writers of comedy for the Latin stage, we have a greater abundance of material, although it is confined to the work of two men, Plautus and Terence; that of Lavinius, so often quoted, and of Caecilius having been lost. Evanthius, the grammarian,





whom we have previously mentioned, divides the *prologues* of the Roman authors into four classes: (1) The *argumentativus*, that describing the plot of the play; (2) the *commendatitius*, that praising and justifying the author; (3) the *relativus*, that attacking the author's rivals, and (4) the most numerous, that containing a combination of the other three. From historical records, we learn that the prologue was common at the time of Plautus, though not universal, but, that with Terence, it became a regular form. We learn moreover that the town-crier or "*titulus*" spoke part of it in the streets, informing the crowds as to the title and character of the piece, the names of the actors, the author and the composer of the music. One other innovation, we note, is that the prologue originally denoting the opening scene of the play came to be confined to the introductory address and, as name, Prologue came to be given to the actor who spoke the lines and not to lines themselves.

Turning to the plays of the earlier of the two writers, Plautus, we have extant fourteen prologues. The first change that strikes us is that they are now formally divorced from the body of the play, and second, *that they are spoken not, as a rule, by a character in the play, but by a per-*

... to give individual attention, dividing the ...  
... (1) The ...  
... (2) ...  
... and ...  
... (3) ...  
... (4) ...  
... of the ...  
... that the ...  
... and ...  
... it ...  
... of ...  
... the ...  
... of the ...  
... and the ...  
... to ...  
... of the ...  
... and the ...  
... to ...  
... and ...  
... and ...  
... and ...

Turning to the ...  
... we have ...  
... the ...  
... the ...  
... the ...

sonage having no connection whatever with it. In the *Rudens*, the role is assigned to a god; in the *Mercator*, *Miles Gloriosus* and *Amphitryon*, while it is spoken by one of the characters it is as an independent address and not as a first speech of a preliminary scene.

Plautus' prologues show indisputable signs of later interpolation. The un-Plautine language, the change of diction and the poor wit has often been remarked. Middleton and Mills deduce textual proof, such as the lines in the play referring to the fixed seats for the spectators (*Poen.* 15, *Amph.* 65, and *Capt.* 11.) which "were forbidden by a s.c. passed in B. C. 154 when Cassius Longinus began to build a theatre of stone - a law that was not repealed till some years later." Apulus, an actor, is said to have written the prologue to the *Casina*, which is the only mention we have in Greek or Roman drama, of the prologue being written by other than the writer of the play and this instance cannot be verified.

In the prologue to *Truculentus*, the actor speaks in the name of the poet, our first example of what later became a custom. He says: "A very small portion of room does Plautus ask from out of your vast and pleasant







city within the walls, whither, without builders, he may transport Athens." In this and the other introductions, he gives us much information as to the nature of the audience. The prologue to *Poenulus* is especially rich in such matter. "Let nurses", he says, "keep children, baby-bantlings, at home, and let no one bring them to see the Play; lest both they themselves may be athirst, and the children may die with hunger; and that they mayn't be squealing about here, in their hungry fits, just like kids." Then he turns his attention to the women: "Let the matrons see the piece in silence, in silence laugh, and let them refrain from screaming here with their shrill voices; their themes for gossip let them carry off home, so as not to be an annoyance to their husbands both here and at home." Something about caste in the seating-arrangements comes out in this extract: "Don't let slaves be occupying the seats, that there may be no room for those who are free; or else let them pay down the money for their places; if that they cannot do, let them be off home, and escape a double evil, lest they be variegated both here with scourges, and with thongs at home, if they've not got things in due order when their masters come home."



In the prologue to *Amphitryon*, he protests against the first-night claque, "if they (the inspectors) should see any suborned applauders of any actor, there should in the theatre be taken away from them the pledge of their coats, as a security for their good behaviour. \*\*\*\*\* He who does aright has ever favourers enough." In most of the "addresses", we have given the names of the play, and something of its import. In *Poenulus*, it is led up to thus: "Now, in its turn, I wish to go back to the plot, that you may be equally knowing with myself. Its site, its limits, its boundaries, I'll now lay down; for that purpose have I been appointed surveyor. But, unless it's troublesome, I wish to give you the name of this Comedy; but if it is an annoyance, I'll tell you still, since I have leave from those who have the management. This Comedy is called the 'Carthaginian', in the Latin, Plautus has called it 'the Pulse-eating Kinsman'. You have the name then; now hear the rest of the story; for here will this plot be judged of by you."

In Terence, the connection between the prologue and the play is severed still more definitely and the prologue has become an instrument of attack, of self-







justification, of literary criticism or polemical discussion. It is shorter in length than those of his predecessors, gives almost no explanation of the plot, telling only its sources and general character. In its personal appeal and conversational observations, it is nearer akin to the parabasis of Aristophanis than to the prologues of any of the Greek tragedies. Terence has been called by Caesar a "half-Menander" and, from this and other references of like nature, we can justly conclude that the characteristics observed in his works must have been similar to those of the Greek comic writer.

Very much in the same manner as we shall later point out in Ben Jonson, Terence uses his prologues to attack his rivals, especially ~~in his case~~, Lucius Lavinius, who evidently accused him of stealing his plays. Terence frankly admits that he borrowed his plots but this was a common usage among his contemporaries, and he says in Andrea "while they are censuring him, they are censuring Naevius, Plautus and Ennius, whom our Poet has for his precedents." He makes no effort to conceal the source of the material. On the contrary he states it briefly, as, when in Adelphi he says:



"Since the Poet has found that his writings are carped at by unfair critics, and that his adversaries represent in a bad light the Play that we are about to perform, he shall give information about himself; you shall be the judges whether this ought to be esteemed to his praise or to his discredit. The Synapothnescontes is a Comedy of Diphilus; Plautus made it into a Play called the "Commorientes".\* In the Greek, there is a young man, who, at the early part of the Play, carries off a Courtesan from a Procurer; that part Plautus has entirely left out. This portion he has adopted in the Adelphi, and has transferred it, translated word for word. This new Play we are about to perform; determine then whether you think a theft has been committed." Acknowledging indebtedness for the plot, he avers that the style and treatment are his own. He angrily disclaims any "borrowing" from Plautus or his contemporaries, saying that if there is a likeness in the story, it comes from ignorance not intention and arguing that the characters of the "virtuous matrons, artful courtesans, the gluttonous parasite, the haggart captain, the infant palmed off;" etc, are stock characters and hence common property.

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\* This is one of the plays of Plautus that is lost.







In the prologue to the Eunuchus, we have voiced, -  
 mind you this is <sup>160</sup> B. C. - the world-old plaint of the  
 dramatist that as to situations, "there is nothing  
 new under the sun," or, as the Prologue speaks it, "In  
 fine, nothing is said now that has not been said be-  
 fore."

Heantontimorumenos begins: "Lest it should be  
 a matter of surprise to any of you, why the Poet has  
 assigned to an old man a part that belongs to the  
 young, that I will first explain to you; and then the  
 reason for my coming I will explain." The speaker in  
 question is said to have been L. Ambivius Turpio, an  
 old man, leader of the company, then performing. The  
 prologue at the time of Terence was usually recited by  
 a young man, this departure from the habit was so un-  
 usual as to necessitate explanation. The reason he as-  
 signs is that this defense of the Poet is so serious  
 as to demand the attention of a man of years, who shall  
 come before the audience as a "Pleader" for his cause,  
 for the young may be more anxious to show off their  
 own skill than to perform the function desired by  
 the author. Moreover, he tells you, he shall appear  
 again in the play in character (eloquos) as Chremes.



The speaker of the prologue, as a rule, did not appear in the play, certainly not in the opening scene, because, reciting the address in the character of Poet, or Prologue, he had to have time to change into the costume of the character he was to assume.

The reason for the two prologues to the Hecyra discloses another interesting bit of historical data. Drama never became to the Romans the supreme art that it was to the Greeks. Primarily a race of fighters, coarser-grained in their tastes, they craved more action and excitement than the stage could give them. Their actors, who were slaves instead of freedmen, worked from compulsion and not for the joy and glory of it, hence their performances lacked the grace and spontaneity of their Hellenistic neighbors. Their plays, moreover, being imitations, never reached the heights of the Greek originals. Even such clever handling as shown by Terence failed to hold them and we have in the Second Prologue of Hecyra, this statement: "The first time when I began to act this Play, the vauntings of boxers, the expectation of rope-dancer, added to which, the throng of followers, the noise, the clamor of the women, caused me to retire from your







presence before the time. In this new Play, I attempted to follow the old custom of mine, of making a fresh trial; I brought it on again. In the first Act I pleased; when in the mean time a rumor spread that gladiators were about to be exhibited." It is said to be this play that Horace\* referred in his Second Book when he speaks of the populace leaving the play in the midst for the sight of a bear, or an exhibition of boxers.

The fiercer joys of the chariot-race and the gladiatorial contests were the final victory. The plays, that, catering more and more to the lewd likings of the rough spectators, had lost all semblance to the ancient Greek models, became so degenerate and worthless that they were rightly condemned by Constantine, after he had been converted to Christianity, and were tossed into the lumber-room of literature where ~~smuch~~ that is worthy as well as the worthless has been lost under the dust-heap of ages.

\* Horace, Book II, L. 185.



## IV.

Prologue in Oriental Drama.

The Oriental races claim great antiquity <sup>drama and by some</sup> for their <sup>^</sup>authorities, it is conceded to be anterior to the Greek, but the only manuscripts *preserved* to us bear no evidence of priority and a later-day comparison of their works shows no such stage of development. The important fact for us is that the Greek was the earliest drama, indigenous to the soil, to influence universally the development of the form as such.

In all of the old Hindu manuscripts, the prologue is a well developed convention, revealing practically the same characteristics in all of the plays. It is spoken by the manager of the company, who is often the "carpenter" of the theatre and generally acts in the play. As a rule he describes the festival which gives occasion for the presentation, tells the title of the play, compliments the author and actors and winds up with





an inventory of the "properties" with which he has set the scene. His address is preceded by a prayer spoken by a Brahman, or, if the stage manager himself is of that caste, he will speak it. At the end of the prologue, which, beginning with the soliloquy, usually terminates by a dialogue between the manager and an actor whom he summons, there is a command to the actors to let the play proceed.

The most perfect examples of the Hindu prologue, or "prastavana", as it was called in Sanscrit, is to be found in the plays of Kálidása, named the Indian Shakespeare. When we consider that he flourished at the court of Vikramaditya, 50 B. C., we will be surprised at the modernity of his offerings. C. H. Tawney has given us an excellent translation of the Malavikágnemitra from which I quote. The prologue or prastavana begins with the usual Nándi or benediction:

"May the lord who, though established in sole supremacy, from which result great



blessings to his votaries, himself wears the garment of skin; who, though his body is united with that of his beloved, is at the head of ascetics whose minds are averted from outward objects; in whom there is no arrogance, though he supports the whole world with his eight forms, may he, I say, remove our state of darkness in order that we may behold the perfect way."

Here ends the Nāṇḁi.

(Enter the Manager)

Manager (looking towards the curtain) Actor, come here for a moment.

(Enter actor)

Actor- Sir, here I am.

Manager- I have received the following order from the spectators: You must act at this spring festival a play named Malavikagnimitra, composed by Kālidāsa; therefore let the representation be begun.

Actor- Not so, I pray. Why do the spectators





pass over the compositions of famous poets, like the honoured bards Bhása, Saumilla, Kaviputra and others; and do such great honor to the work of Kálicása, a modern poet?

Manager- Ah!.your remark is wanting in critical acumen. Observe! Every old poem is not good because it is old; nor is every new poem to be blamed because it is new; sound critics, after examination, choose one or the other, the blockhead must have his judgment guided by the knowledge of his neighbors.

Actor- The honourable spectators are the best judges.

Manager- Then make haste. I long to perform the order of the spectators which I received some-time ago with bowed head, even as this servant of the Queen Dháriní, skilful in attendance, longs to perform her order.

(Excunt Actors)   ”

The prologue to the better known drama

and the other two, the first of which is the most  
 (the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most

and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most

and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most  
 and the other two are the same, but the first is the most

(The other two are the same, but the first is the most)

The other two are the same, but the first is the most

Śakoontalā by the same author is similar in character, a deviation coming in the fact that the manager calls an actress on the stage instead of an actor and that she tries her voice by singing a stanza for the approval of the audience. After which, the manager, being satisfied, bids the play begin.

The Persians bequeath no fragment of a dramatic work in their ample literature earlier than the fifteenth century. The first specimens are Téaziés or lamentations, a kind of mystery play that, in its earliest form, is little more than an elegy in honor of the martyrs. By the time of the Miracles of Hasan and Hasain, there are scenes in dialogue, preceded by a prayer and a prologue concerning the object of the presentation. At the climax of the performance, there is a prayer offered by Hasain in character and the end of the play is always a scene representing the fulfillment of that prayer. As an example of the perfected form of Persian mystery, or Téaziés, we have published by M. Alexandre Ghodzko, at one time Russian consul





to Persia, a play which, while not complete, M. Royer\* believes exhibits the virtues of the Téaziés in its highest degree. The play is called "The Death of the Prophet" and, as are all the Persian mysteries, is consecrated to the glory of Allah. The prologue is an address by the Rouzékhan, concerning the solemnity of the occasion. He bewails the persecutions of the family of the Prophet and tears his beard and cries aloud, a sympathetic assistant or chorus joining him. A mystic chant concludes the prologue after which we have the play which corresponds to the simplicity and unity of the Greek tragedy rather than the formless tableau structure of the mysteries.

The Chinese drama, like the Hindu, establishes claims to a greater priority than the Persian. Indeed, their first union of dance and song they place eighteen centuries before Christ. Historical chronicles claim the honor of the invention for the Emperor Yuen-Tsung, 720 A. D. Among the earliest plays to come down to us are The Little Orphan of the House of Tchav and The Sorrows of Hân.

\*Royer, Histoire Universelle du Théâtre.



The former served as a model for Voltaire's Orphan of China; from which he borrowed generously without making acknowledgment of his indebtedness. The Sorrows of Hân, one of the hundred plays of Yuen, has a quaint "Proem" or prologue forming practically the first act. The three chief characters enter separately, each recites a verse of four lines, confides in the audience his history and his character and disappears. Say the first comer, the Khan; "I am Hanchenyn, the old inhabitant of sandy waste; the sole ruler of the northern regions. The wild chase is our trade; battle and conquest our chief occupation." Says the minister: "I am no other than Maonyenshow, a minister of the sovereign of Han. By a hundred arts of specious flattery and address I have deceived the Emperor." "Behold in us the Emperor, "announces that worthy, and after a short dialogue with his minister, all retire that the play may begin.

This prologue is possessed of the usual characteristics of the Chinese drama, familiar to us in plays "done in the Chinese manner", such as

the young people in the village - a group  
of about twenty or thirty - were sitting  
under the shade of the big trees, and  
talking to each other. One of the women  
was a young girl, and she was talking  
to the others. The others were sitting  
around her, and they were all looking  
at her. She was talking about the  
future of the village, and she was  
telling them that they should all  
work together to make it a better  
place. She was saying that they should  
all have a say in what was done, and  
that they should all be equal. She was  
saying that they should all be free to  
do what they wanted, and that they  
should all be able to live in peace  
and harmony. She was saying that they  
should all be able to have a good life,  
and that they should all be able to  
make a better future for themselves  
and for their children. She was saying  
that they should all be able to have a  
say in what was done, and that they  
should all be equal. She was saying that  
they should all be free to do what they  
wanted, and that they should all be able  
to live in peace and harmony. She was  
saying that they should all be able to  
have a good life, and that they should  
all be able to make a better future for  
themselves and for their children.

They were all sitting there, and they  
were all listening to her. They were all  
looking at her, and they were all  
talking to each other. They were all  
saying that they would do what she  
said, and that they would all work  
together to make the village a better  
place. They were all saying that they  
would all have a say in what was done,  
and that they would all be equal. They  
were all saying that they would all be  
free to do what they wanted, and that  
they would all be able to live in peace  
and harmony. They were all saying that  
they would all be able to have a good  
life, and that they would all be able  
to make a better future for themselves  
and for their children.



The Yellow Jacket or the Willow Plate. The leading characters appear and introduce themselves in soliloquy. Sometimes they are preceded by a chorus or a Property Man who serves as an introductory figure to the characters in the plot. In Teonngo-youen, the first scene is a monologue with a brief dialogue at the end. Tching-té-hoel, a prolific writer, gives us an instance, in the prologue to Ho-han-chan, of the leading character telling not only his name, but that of the rest of the cast.

Says he: \* "My family name is Tchang, my surname I, my honorable title Wen-sieon. As to my country I was born at Nanking. My family is composed of four persons; myself, my wife Tchav-chi, my son Tchang-hiav-yeon and my brother-in-law, Li-yu-ngo."

The peculiarity of the Oriental drama is its tenacity in adhering to old forms. The Chinese plays of today have practically the same prologue that they had two thousand years ago. The Persians have introduced little that is original, though in their modern plays, the French influence is distinctly marked. The well-known Indian poet of our time,

\*Ho-han-chan, Trans. into French by Bazin.



Rabindranath Tagore casts his poetry into dramatic form but it is essentially introspective in character and has neither the prologue introduction nor the conventional exposition of normal European <sup>^</sup>structure.





## V

Prologue in the Miracle & Mystery Plays.

The old drama, that had its birth at a pagan shrine of Greece, died on Roman soil and, for a thousand years, lay like some sleeping princess, inert, forgotten. Strolling jugglers there were, or minstrels who sang topical songs before careless banqueters, but the art of the drama was dead, and nowhere do we find a record of a play written or performed in a theatre during all this stretch of years. Even the stone theatres themselves, forsaken and useless, fell into decay.

When drama had its rebirth, it was again at the altar but this time in the Christian church. The miracle and mystery plays, that grew from the desire of the clergy to visualize a church lesson for the untutored members, became the popular form for self expression. Few examples remain to us of these old plays, because they lack the literary quality which is the best safeguard against oblivion. Rude compilations, the work



of anonymous clerical writers, they served their purpose and dropped swiftly into "the wallet of Time". We have a few examples of early mysteries, the most perfect specimens being in the English tongue found in the four famous collections, the Chester, Coventry, York and Townley Cycles.

There is no method of ascertaining in what country the religious lesson first assumed a dramatic form. Priests travelled widely in those days, carrying news and suggestions of helpful customs with them. When the form was first remarked, it was already in ~~use~~ in several different lands. The first record made of ~~them~~<sup>it</sup> traces ~~their~~<sup>its</sup> appearance to the ninth century, although ~~they~~<sup>it</sup> could not at that date have been more than <sup>a</sup>dramatic dialogues. The earliest complete manuscript, that has been preserved to us, is an elaborated dialogue on the theme of the resurrection, *Mysterium Resurrectionis D. N. Jhesu Christi*, of the 13th century, preserved by Thomas Wright in the City of Orleans. The first record of a performance in England is that given by Geoffrey, later Abbot of St. Albans, who came





from France during the twelfth century for the purpose. By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, such performances were numerous.

The prologue appears with our earliest mysteries and in all the examples procurable, its characteristics are similar and such as belong very naturally to a form which was an out-growth of church ritual. It appears first as a prayer or sermon interspersed with Latin texts. A profitable comparison may now be made of the prayers found in Greek tragedy, with those remarked in the Hindu drama and those introducing the miracle and mystery plays. The Watchman in Aeschylus' Agamemnon thus invokes the gods:

"I pray the gods deliverance from these toils,  
This year -long watch, which, prone on  
Atreius' roof  
With head esconsed in arm, dog-like, I keep".

The opening prayer in the Suppliants of Euripides spoken by Aetha is as expositive as it is supplicatory:



"Thou guardian power of Eleusine's land,  
 O Ceres, and ye venerable priests  
 Of that benignant goddess, who attend  
 This temple, blessings for myself I crave,  
 For my son Theseus, Athens, and the realm  
 Of Pitheus, who, when his paternal care  
 Had reared my childhood in a wealthy house,  
 Gave me to Aegeus, to Pandion's son;  
 So Phoebus' oracles decreed.

In each case the prayer is offered by the speaker on his character in the play and for matters concerning the plot and not as in the Hindoo play for the audience or the actor as a human being. In Śakoontalā the opening benedicition reads:

"Isa preserve you! he who is revealed  
 In these eight forms by man perceptible-  
 Tater, of all creation's works the first;  
 The fire that bears on high the sacrifice  
 Presented with solemnity to heaven;  
 The Priest, the holy offerer of gifts;  
 The Sun and Moon, those two majestic orbs





Eternal marshallers of day and night;  
 The subtle Ether, vehicle of sound,  
 Diffused throughout the boundless universe;  
 The Earth, by sages called 'The peace of  
     birth  
 Of all material essences and things';  
 And Air, which giveth life to all that  
     breathe."

From an old French Mystery, "Le Jugement de Dieu", we transcribe the following prayer with its insert of Latin.

"Mais pour ce que tout notre bien  
 de Dieu avons, don vient tout bien,  
 Au nom de noz hystoriens,  
 le prierous à jointes mains.

'Hic oret genibus flexis, capite aperto, vultu  
 versus orientem verso.'

O seigneur, dieu omnipotent,  
 nous vous prions tres humblement,



que ce soit vostre bon plaisir  
 de nous conduyre et secourir,  
 aux fins que puissions commanser  
 moyenner et parachever  
 vostre universel jugement,  
 a vostre honneur premierment,  
 et a l'edification  
 de ceste congregation,  
 par JesuoChrist, vostre chair filz,  
 qu'a vostre dextre est assis.

And, again, the first two of the one hundred and  
 seventy lines of the "Mystery of "La Nativité, la  
 Passion, la Resurrection de Notre-Seigneur, JesusChrist"  
 are

"Dieu, Père et Filz et Saint Esperit,  
 Sauve et gart ceste compaignie."

In each of which we will observe the benediction is  
 asked for the spectators. In others, God's sanction  
 is asked as well for the play, the author and the  
 actors, "bless those who listen attentively, aid  
 their understanding and finally open Paradise to all".





The audience is enjoined "to pray, to serve God, to listen in silence and to remember the lesson of the mystery."

In the English miracles we note practically the same invocations, exhortations to good work and pleas for favor. Like the French prologues, the prayers are for the congregation. The invocation at the beginning of the eighth Pageant of the First Mystery, The Birth of Mary, taken from the Cotton manuscript, reads:

"Cryste conserve this congregation  
Fro' perellys past, p'sent, and futur,  
And the p'so'nys her' pleand."

The long prologue to the Coventry cycle has the following prayer at the commencement:

"Now gracyous God, groundyd of alle goodnesse,  
As thi grete glorie nevyr begynnyny had,  
So thous socour and save alle tho that  
sytt and sese,  
And lystenȝth to oure talkyng with sylens



style and sad,  
 ffor we purpose us pertly style in this  
 presse.

The pepyl to plese with plays ful glad."

The cycles were introduced by a lengthy prologue beginning with the invocation and including information as to the various pageants. The prologue to the Coventry cycle has been preserved in full and has been reprinted by the Shakespeare Society in their *Ludus Coventriae*, edited by M. Halliwell. Beside the general prologue which gave the argument for the series, there are frequent announcements for the separate pageants such as that spoken by Contemplacio at the beginning of the LXth pageant of the Coventry group, or the Precodiat in the IVth play of the Chester cycle. In the last named play, the History of Lot and Abraham, the prologue, here designated, "Expositor", intervenes in the middle of the play to point out the special moral of the situation:

"Lordinges, this signifacioun





Of this deed of devocion,  
And you will you witten mone,  
Maye torne you to moche good."

Another distinguishing feature of the religious prologues is the apology for undertaking so sacred a subject, as well as for the acting and the presentation. There are frequently outlines of the subject-matter and treatment of the theme, though the Bible stories are assumed to be as familiar to the spectators as the old sagas were to the Greeks. The so-called "Spoken Mysteries" of France of the fifteenth Century usually began with a statement of the subject and concluded with a command to the players to begin. Between the prologue proper and the play, it became the custom to introduce a fool who entertained the crowd with some buffoonery that should sugar-coat the moral in the sermon.

A plea for silence and attention is found in most of the prologues and, when we realize that once the performance was turned out of the church, the crowds, who had to stand, must have been very large indeed, we can conceive the restless nature of



the untutored, unused to continued intellectual effort and of those on the outskirts who could not hear clearly and perhaps see little or nothing. The benediction of the Hosts was asked for those who listened in silence while veiled threats and punishment were suggested for those who disturbed others.

There are no evidences of polemics, of literary criticism, of vituperation or of condemnation of rivals in these prologues. The tone, as befitting the nature of the piece, is moral and indulges in praise of rulers, both spiritual and temporal, with an evident desire to propitiate the powers that be. After a performance of a Breton mystery, religious enthusiasm was so heightened that there arose a proverb which runs, "Les foules y vont en chantant et en reviennent en pleurant."

In the earliest mysteries the prologues were spoken by the priests who were the authors, actors and managers as well. After the performance of the plays was given over to the laymen and the vernacular substituted for the Latin, members of the various guilds became the spokesmen. But even after the guilds gave the performances, it is probable a priest con-





tinued in the office of prologuist from the religious nature of the context. Prof. Carnahan concludes that this was the case in France. He remarks: "The prologue was written by the author, but from the wording it is clear that no one but a priest would dare, or would be fitted to give it, if we take into consideration the religious conditions at the time the mysteries were played. The hortatory, chiding tone of these sermons would not have been accepted by the people from other than the accredited ministers, and the church like-wise would not have encouraged this exact imitation of sermons in the mouths of laymen. Again, the fact that often but a part of the scriptural text is written, followed by the word 'etc.' would indicate as prologuist some one capable of completing this text".

We get some illumination from the headings but the nomenclature is deceptive. Thus we have prologues headed "messenger", "herald", "actor", "author", "prologuer", "preco" and "nuncius". The "nuncius" brings us back to a figure that had its Roman correspondence in the "titulus" and in the town-



crier of London. In France the Nuncius or Trompeta is known to have gone about the streets assembling a crowd by means of his horn. Then announcing the subject of the coming pageants or miracle plays, *he gave* something of their character and urged all to come, "pour l'amour de Dieu". The town-crier in England performed the same office, being a kind of publicity agent extolling his wares and exciting anticipation in the representation. In the Breton mysteries the prologue is sometimes recited by one designated "The Witness" and is a character supposed to have been present at the scenes to be enacted. He gives an outline of them and, during the performance, comments upon them very much after the fashion of the Greek chorus. ¶ As examples of irregular forms of the prologue may be mentioned those which are preceded by a dialogue, those which begin by a chorus of angels, as in the Mystery of Saint Anthoine, or which include a ballad as was the case in several of the French and many of the Spanish mysteries. *La Vengeance de Notre Seigneur* commences with a ballad dedicating the mystery to King Charles VIII and giving the

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general  
discussion of the problem. It is shown that the  
problem is equivalent to the problem of finding  
the minimum of a certain function. This function  
is defined by the following expression:  
$$F(x) = \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m a_{ij} x_{ij} + \sum_{i=1}^n b_i x_i + \sum_{j=1}^m c_j x_j$$
  
where  $a_{ij}$ ,  $b_i$ , and  $c_j$  are given constants.  
The minimum of this function is attained at  
the point  $(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n, x_{n+1}, \dots, x_{n+m})$   
where  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n$  are the optimal values  
of the variables  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n$  and  
 $x_{n+1}, \dots, x_{n+m}$  are the optimal values  
of the variables  $x_{n+1}, \dots, x_{n+m}$ .

The second part of the paper is devoted to a  
detailed analysis of the problem. It is shown  
that the problem is equivalent to the problem  
of finding the minimum of a certain function.  
This function is defined by the following  
expression:  
$$F(x) = \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m a_{ij} x_{ij} + \sum_{i=1}^n b_i x_i + \sum_{j=1}^m c_j x_j$$
  
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sources of the piece. This is followed by a second ballad praising Charles VIII for his persecution of the Jews, ending with the refrain; "Que le bon roy tres-crestien de france;" after which follows the regular prologue. There are also to be found in the French mysteries, "Diablerie" which sometimes followed, sometimes preceded the prologue and, in one or two instances, were used as a prologuial introduction. They comprised short scenes, usually comic, in which Lucifer is the chief character.

In the York, Townley and Chester cycles, we have the recitation of the prologue by the principal character in the play, in the costume of the part he is to enact. In the Coventry Cycle, he is replaced by an allegorical figure the "Prologus" or "Contemplacio". Abstract characters of the virtues, Justice, Misericordia, Veritas and Pax appear, with the Deus Pater and Deus Filius, in the Angelic Salutation and it is these personifications that later, becoming detached, developed into the moralities.

Allegorical figures are numerous in the Spanish mysteries and in the autos sacramentales which



grew out of them. The prologue to Cervantes' famous Numantia is spoken by an actor in the role of Fame. The Autos sacramentales were intended to celebrate the mystery of the Eucharist and it is because such talent as that of Cervantes, of Lope de Vega and of Calderon was turned to them that we have preserved in their works examples of this form. The Spanish prologue, although the native specimens were of later day than those considered in this section, deserves from its unusual form some special mention. It was called "loa", or compliment,<sup>and,</sup> as we find it in the later mysteries and in the autos, and as the nomenclature implies, contained expressions of a laudatory character. At times it begins with a hymn or prayer, followed by an address that has no connection with the play. By 1500, it showed plainly the influence of the classical revival and in the "Elisa Dido" of Virues, there is a borrowing of plot as well as form from the ancients. Lope de Vega's morality play "The Soul's Voyage" has a prologue cumbersome with learning, followed by a ballad and a dance before the introduction of the "Moral Action" itself.

A characteristic loa introduces Calderon's La





Vida es Sueno, Life's a Dream. It is a dialogue-the form usually employed by Lope-between the Five Senses, Body personified by an old man, Reason and a chorus of singers. After some discussion over the respective greatness of the miracles of the Incarnation, the Crucifixion and the Real Presence in the Sacrament, Hearing announces that an auto bearing the title, La Vida es Sueno, is to be produced. Each of the Senses then recites a verse in honor of the Incarnation and the loa ends by a request for silence from the audience. Lope de Vega's loas like the prologues of Sophocles are little dramas in themselves. The first one in his collection of autos is very amusing, a peasant comes on and informs us that he and his wife came to town to see the procession and the auto about to be performed but that she has been lost in the crowd. Just as he is congratulating himself on his liberty, the wife appears, describes the procession that the audience themselves have just watched and drags her husband off to see the auto which is then announced.

The loas could be shortened or expanded at will and the form, as handed down to us, depends



largely upon whether it was printed as first written or from a subsequent manuscript. The cause of this variation was the fact that the performance could not begin until the grandees were seated and, if these nobles chose to be late, the manager must devise means of placating the crowds. Oftenest this was by singing or dancing, sometimes it meant an elongation of the prologue.

Italy, to which we would naturally turn for the highest expression of the mystery, both, because it was the birth place of the old drama and because it was the seat of papal authority, gives us, on the contrary, fewer examples of religious plays than almost any of the other nations. Once the elaboration of the ritual stepped outside the church portico, the authorities began to frown on it and any licence the Church might have permitted the State forbade. So, though we have some Italian mysteries for reference, they show no originality in their prologues, either as to form or material. A prayer, followed by an angel with the announcement of the subject, constituted the introduction. In the Passion of Jesus Christ performed by the Company of Gonfalonni in the Coliseum





in Rome, the prologue concludes briefly:

"Si state attenti qui con devotione  
 Viderete recitar la santa Passione  
 Viderete come Giuda si pente  
 Et poi viderete come fu undato."

Lorenzo de Medeci, to gain the favor of the church, it is said, wrote the play of St. Paul and of St. Constance. The customary angel-prologuist addresses the audience directly, telling them their ruler desires his dear Florentines to be still during the singing, so that the actors may not be fatigued and they may go home more content.

The German mysteries, as might be reckoned of a nation whose "verb is music" are full of song. Some of the most famous hymns handed down from this period are those which introduced or were part of the prologues. The oldest mystery of which we have a record is one assigned to the thirteenth century entitled the Mystery of the Passion. \* Hase tells us the people failed to chronicle their religious productions and that the only information, we can unearth in this connection, is certain indirect

\* Hase, Miracle Plays and Sacred Drama.



references connected with civic affairs. For instance, there was recorded in Bautzen in the year 1412 in a city chronicle the death of some thirty persons occasioned by the falling down of a roof during the performance of the Mystery of St. Doro<sup>o</sup>thea. The manuscript of this mystery has been preserved and the prologue, which Hase has transcribed for us from the old German is:-

"In allen diesen dingen,  
 Das ein ieglich meusche will beginnen,  
 So sol er ze dem ersten got ruofen an  
 Des allerbesten des er kan,  
 Daz daz ende werde gut  
 Mit meure sundi mit merremgut:  
 Des helpe uns got ze disen dingen,  
 Daz uns alhie mueze wol gelingen,  
 Un din heilige juncoron Dorothe,  
 Daz uns der helfe werde me,  
 Nu singe wir alle disen leis:  
 Nu bite wir den herligen geist.

Et cantat omnis populus."

The last line, in Latin, refers to the singing of the hymn already mentioned, and reveals the fact that the audience was expected to join in the singing. An





anonymous German manuscript preserved in one of the monasteries is called Susanna, with a probable date 1535. The prologue tells us that it was performed in Magdeburg.

"hic ist nu Babylan behend  
doch so das Spiel erreicht sein end  
Magdeburg es wieder werden soll,  
Gott mach sú aller gnaden voll!"

An angel speaks most of the prologues of the earlier German mysteries but, by the sixteenth century, he has become a herald. Hans Sacks, the beloved shoemaker of Nuremberg, employs the herald in the greater number of his plays which, though not strictly mysteries, use the same Biblical material. In one of his plays he speaks of a Latin source and designate the play a comedy:

"A comedy and tale of delight  
Of which the original did indite  
In Latin Philip Melanchthon".

A carnival play by the monk Waldis commences with the Hymn, Veni Creator Spiritus, with



which so many of the mysteries began, and proceeds to the announcement by the Prologue that the nature of the subject is serious and that there shall not be a display of "wanton merriment" as in the Roman carnivals, where "senior poltron, madonna putana and ribaldus" were brought in. A variation occurs in an old Christmas play in which the prologue appears as a heathen god employed to bring home a moral lesson as well as to enjoin silence from the children.

\*

"Good day, good Sirs, good day! a wicked man you see!

All children here would make a single meal for me."

†

Examples of the Netherland mysteries, akin to the German are found in the fourteenth century, "Abele spelen" and have regularly a prologue beginning with a prayer or hymn, followed by an address by an angel or herald which concludes with an admonition of silence.

One fact that we must emphasize in reference to the prologues of the mysteries, in whatever

1870-1871  
The first year of the  
year was a very dry one  
and the crops were very  
poor. The weather was  
very hot and the crops  
were very dry. The  
crops were very poor  
and the weather was  
very hot. The crops  
were very poor and  
the weather was very  
hot.

The second year of the  
year was a very wet one  
and the crops were very  
good. The weather was  
very cool and the crops  
were very good. The  
crops were very good  
and the weather was  
very cool. The crops  
were very good and  
the weather was very  
cool.



country they appear, is that they were an original out-growth necessitated by the conditions of presentation and nowhere, until they were a well-established form, did they feel the influence of the Greek and Latin classics. The old plays were still read in the cloisters and we have the nun, Hrosvitha, writing six Latin comedies in imitation of Terence. Also more than a century later, a tragedy, the Passion of Christ, assigned to ST. Gregory Nazienzen speaks thus in the prologue:

\*

"Thou who hast verses heard with pious soul,  
And now a pious tale in verse would hear,  
With willing ear incline to me who sing,  
After the manner of Euripides,  
The pangs of Him who saved mankind from bale."

But the classical studies were too pagan in character to be publicly tolerated, and, it was not until the sweep of the Renaissance brought Seneca and the Greek tragic writers in its wake, that the native prologue first gave way to and secondly became amalgamated with the Greek models.



## VI

Prologue in the Elizabethan Era and during  
the Restoration.

When we come to the Elizabethan period- using Elizabethan in its wider sense- we find our Prodigal Prologue has come into its own. The fatted calf of many an intellect is offered in its service and, by the time of Dryden and the Restoration, it has become the petted darling of the dramatist. In the very natural progress by which mystery and miracle developed the morality and passed into the chronicle and historical drama, certain conventions were retained practically unchanged, foremost among which was the prologue.

Then came the revolution of the Renaissance with its classicism and its Latin importations, banishing certain existing conventions to the class of upstart barbarities, reserving others as consistant with the old precepts. When the prologue, from its Euripidean correspondence, was retained in the second class and stamped, moreover, with the





scholastic approval, its fortune was indeed made.

Of the thousands of plays that came tumbling upon the boards during the next prolific century, we can take only a general survey, having neither the time nor the desire to consider separately the multiple examples. From the mass of material, we shall strive to deduce facts as to the general form and character of the prologue; the kind of information we find dished up in this condensed style; the speaker and the role assumed by him; the relation the form now bears to the rest of the play, and the various causes that led to its decline in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Surveying the works of the pre-Shakespearian dramatists, we find that the majority of plays begin with the prologues. By prologue, we mean the formal introduction in the Euripidean sense, and not the expository matter in the body of the play. That is to be considered in our next section. There are no formal prologues with the plays of Greene, or of Webster. Massinger has only four in his group of eighteen plays; Dekker two, the second belonging to a work of collaboration, The Witch of Edmonton.



Since the prologue was often spoken only on the first night of the presentation and all manuscripts of that day more or less carelessly handled, we cannot say that these men did not write prologues. A few were undoubtedly lost. We have only seven in the works of Shakespeare though he is known to have written others.

That some of the men found the form uncongenial and refused to turn their hand to it is equally certain. Others, like Beaumont and Fletcher, omitted it from about half of their works and complied grumblingly with the custom in others. In the prologue to the Humorous Lieutenant, these skillful collaborators complain in this wise:

"Would some man would instruct me what to say;  
For this same prologue, usual to a play,  
Is tied to such an old form of petition,  
Men must say nothing now beyond commission."

Wycherly, although he employs the "foreword" to all of his dramas, seems to feel the burden of the convention, when he says in the prologue to his *Love in a Wood*:





"Custom, which bids the thief from cart  
 harangue

All those that come to make and see him hang,  
 Wills the damn'd poet (though he knows he's gone)  
 To greet you ere his execution."

Examining Ralph Roister Doister, which claims the distinction of being the first English comedy, and Gammer Gurton's Needle, perhaps the first farce, we find a prologue with each. The former is a somewhat formal statement, in four rhymed stanzas of seven lines each, of the virtue of mirth and the title and nature of the play. The prologue to the farce is a playful presentation of preceding events in the plot and contains neither prohibition or compliment to the audience. The prologue to Norton and Sackville's early English tragedy, Gordoduc, is in the form of a "Domme Shew" a device often resorted to by playwrights, especially of the more serious drama, to give the significance or keynote of the play about to be enacted. The directions that go with Gordoduc are:

"First the musicke of violenze began to play,



during which came in upon the stage sixe wilde men, clothed in leaues; of whom the first bare in his necke a fagot of small stickes, which they all, both severally and together, assayed with all their strengthes to breake, but it could not be broken by them. At the length, one of them plucked out one of the stickes and brake it, and the rest plucking out all the other stickes one after an-other did easely brake them, the same being severed, which, being conioyned, they had before attempted in vaine. After they had done this, they departed the stage; and the musicke ceased. Hereby was signified that a state knit in unitie doth continue strong against all force, but being divided is easely destroyed: As befell upon Duke Gorboduc dividing his land to his two sonnes, which he before held in monarchie, and upon the discernion of the brethern to whom it was divided".

Peele in his Tragical Battle of Alcazar in Barbary begins with a soliloquy by a Presenter, which is followed by a First Dumb Show and a Second Dumb Show commented upon during their progress by the Presenter. Thomas Heywood in his delightful





Interludes, a form in which he was pre-eminent, gives us "Arguments", although they were written to be spoken. In this regard they bear a closer semblance to the Greek form than most of those written at this time, yet in his prologue to *Challenge for Beauty*, he denies this very analogy:

"The Roman and Athenian Drammars farre  
Differ from us, and those that frequent are  
In Italy and France, even in these days,  
Compared with ours are rather jiggs than  
Playes".

A prologuist, named Chorus, speaks the induction to Christopher Marlow's Dr. Faust<sup>us</sup> and "one in the character of Machiavel" that to the Jew of Malta. Marlowe expended little energy on his prologues; they are short, those to the first and second parts of *Tamburlaine* being eight lines each in verse, and setting forth simply the argument of the theme which he commends to the spectators.

In the collections of Shakespeare's plays, we have prologues to *Troilus and Cressida*, *Pericles*, *Romeo and Juliet*, the *Taming of the Shrew*,



King Henry V, King Henry VIII, and the Second Part of King Henry IV and, though three out of the seven are the plays classed under collaboration, their similarity to the other four in style and purpose make it possible for us to deduce from them general characteristics. Shakespeare's use of the prologue is more nearly akin to that of the later Greek poets than to the Elizabethans. It has not the structural unity found in Aeschylus and Sophocles. Like his counterpart in Plautus, the prologuist steps out of the picture and addresses himself to the audience. Yet in each case enough of the argument is given to start the suspense and nowhere does the author <sup>mean</sup> demean himself to court the favor of the public, or to berate his rivals.

In King Henry V there is a prologue by name Chorus, who discourses at the beginning of each act relating the incidents that are supposed to have taken place in the interval elapsing between the acts. Before Act V, he says:

"Vouchsafe to those that have not read the story,





That I may prompt them; and of such as have,  
 I humbly pray them to admit the excuse  
 Of time, of numbers and due course of things,  
 Which cannot in their huge and proper life  
 Be here presented. Now we bear the king  
 Toward Calais" etc.

Troilus and Cressida has a prologue of thirty-one lines, giving us first the setting, then the subject of the play and ending with the confidence addressed directly to the audience: "and hither am I come

A prologue arm'd, but not in confidence  
 Of author's pen or actor's voice, but suited  
 In like conditions as our argument,  
 To tell you, fair beholders, that our play  
 Leaps dar the vaunt and firstlings of  
 those broils,  
 Beginning in the middle; starting thence  
 away  
 To what may be digested in a play.  
 Like or find fault, do as your pleasures are;  
 Now good or bad, 'tis but the chance of war."



The prologue to Romeo and Juliet gives the argument of the play as well as its fatal outcome, a procedure that would be resented by the average modern audience. King Henry VIII begins with a prologue that tells nothing of the action of the piece, but warns his audience that he comes not to make them laugh, but to present "Such noble scenes as draw the eye to flow". Gower, as Chorus, for Pericles, begs the favor of the assembly and, in Greek fashion, gives them the facts that proceed the opening scenes of the plot. The Second Part of King Henry IV commences with soliloquy spoken by a prologue in the character of Rumour, "painted full of tongues." The prologue to the Taming of the Shrew is in the form of an Introduction in two Scenes. It is really a one act play complete in itself, centering in the situation of the drunken Sly. Then there is the scene between the Lord and the actors, in which, after the manner of the Hindu plays, the actors promise his lordship a "merry comedy" and the presentation of the main action is thus motivated.





Beaumont and Fletcher made use of such introductory by-play in their *Knight of the Burning Pestle*. In this instance, 'one in the guise' of Prologue comes out to speak, when he is stopped by the intrusion of a citizen, his wife and his son Ralph, who plant themselves, at the side of the stage, furnish the Induction and comment on the play at the end of each act.

The two men, who were most prolific in the writing of prologues and have left us the most numerous examples, as well as the most varied forms, are Ben Jonson, who appeared before the Restoration, and John Dryden, who came after it. The two special characteristics to be noted in prologues from the plays of Jonson are their ingenious variety and their usage, very much like that of Terence, to defend the author and to attack his rivals. The monotony of the usual presentation began to pall upon a novelty-loving audience and Jonson was quick to seize upon some of the devices that he so happily employed in his masques. For *The Magnetic Lady*, he uses a scene of Induction similar to the device in the Hindu plays.

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The Staple of News has an Induction preceding the prologue proper, though the two may be considered as prologue in the Aristotelian sense. In the last named play, four Gossips, Mirth, Tattle, Expectation and Censure, talk with Master Prologue about the title of the forthcoming production, until the prompter bids Prologue speak his lines, which he does, after having with difficulty silenced Gossip Mirth. In Cynthia's Revels, two of the children of the Chapel fight for the privilege of speaking the prologue, rending the black cloak in their contention. Another novelty attained by the help of stage mechanics is introduced at the beginning of his Poetaster. Envy rises out of the ground, speaks her lines and is seen to slowly descend, just as a "Prologue in armour" enters and addresses her.

This prologue to the Poetaster is also illustrative of the second characteristic of Jonsen's usage, that of vituperation and abuse. In this instance, it is Dekker who is the subject of attack of the most vehement style. Dekker later, it may here be mentioned, answered the attack in a very





acrid play *Satiromastix*, in which he trounces his denouncer in caustic style under the name of Horace. Jonson avers that "his mind it is above their injuries", yet his continued return to the subject of his detractors disproved his claim. While he deals with the general mob of "that common spasm of ignorance, our fry of writers", in sweeping denunciation, he does not hesitate to attack the popular Will Shakespeare, although in less open allusions. The quickness of Shakespeare's wit and his readiness in composition irritated Jonson, who was a slow and laborious worker. He complains that some poets-evidently meaning Shakespeare- upset all cannons of play-writing (the unities again), when, "in some one play we see so many seas, countries, and kingdoms passed over" or when the poet doth "make a child, new swaddled, to proceed

Man, and then shoot up, in one beard and weed,  
Past three-score years."

The Puritans, we will remember, shut down the playhouses and a damper was put upon the art of

and the fact that, in such a case, the

company is not in a position to

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writing for the stage. After the Restoration, however, there was an enthusiastic revival of dramatic works and the prologue bobbed up, along side the other conventions, as lightheartedly as though it had never been sunk in disuse. In the hands of Dryden, it became not a new form but subject to new emphasis. He made of it a highly polished essay, in whose small compass, he gave us abundant detail of the social, political and literary life of his times, criticisms of the theory of poetry and drama, information as to the customs of the theatres, the actors, the playwrights and the taste and manners of the audiences. He differed from Jonson in that, while he was essentially militant, his attacks were less personal, being directed against theories of literary workmanship or faulty tenets of style, rather than against the individual dramatist or even one special play.

Sir Walter Scott, in an introduction to a volume of Dryden's prologues and Epilogues, writes of them thus: "if he (Dryden) sometimes condescends





to solicit, in a more humble style, the approbation of the audience, and to state circumstances of apology, and pleas of favour, it is only in the case of other poets; for, in the prologues of his own plays, he always rather, demands than begs their applause; and, if he acknowledges any defects in the piece, he takes care to intimate that they are introduced in compliance with "the evil taste of the age." And again in speaking of the indecency of most of the plays of that day and especially of their prologues and epilogues Scott remarks; "till very lately, it was expected by the mobbish part of the audience that they should be indemnified for the patience with which they had listened to the moral lessons of a tragedy, by the indecency of the epilogue. In Dryden's time this coarse raillery was carried to a great excess; but our author, however culpable in other compositions, is, generally speaking, more correct than his contemporaries in his prologues and epilogues".

Certain prologues written for London productions are as licentious, we think, as any that were penned, but the fact that many of Dryden's forewords



werecomposed for Oxford, "that mother of learning" an absence of sensational indecorum, as well as the introduction of much weighty erudition, will be explained. One favorite topic for disertation was the theory of literay composition and his famous attitude in defense of poesy. Although he was frankly inconsistent and changed his ~~views~~ on both subjects, as often, in his day, as a belle changes her dress in her daily round, he never ceases to comment upon it in its varying forms. He gave up the poetic form of expression only after a brave defense of it and long loyalty in its service.

The prologue written by Dryden for Southerne's play The Loyal Brother is a striking specimen of his political attacks against the Whigs. In an age, when literary talent, wherever found, was bought up by the government, it was not unusual to find writers enroled as earnest partisans, yet few went to the violent extremes employed by John Dryden. This particular example begins thus:

"Poets, like lawful monarchs, ruled the stage  
Till critics, like damned Whigs, debauched





our age.

Mark how they jump! critics would regulate  
Our theatres, and Whigs reform our state;  
Both pretend love, and both (plague rot them!)  
hate.

The critic humbly seems advice to bring,  
The fawning Whig petitions to the King;  
But one's advice into a satire slides,  
T'other's petition a remonstrance hides.  
These will no taxes give, and those no pence;  
The critics would starve the poet, Whigs the  
prince."

The prologue written by him for a revival of Beaumont and Fletcher's, *The Propheters*, went beyond party attack and contained in metaphor such offensive sneers at the King and his campaign in Ireland that it was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain after the first day's representation. His satires, attacking the Puritans as well as the Papists and Jesuits, called forth Jeremy Collier's notable work entitled *Profanity of the Stage*.

Just as Aristophanes satirized the prologues

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of Euripides in The Frogs, Moliere those of Plautus in Amphibryon, so we find in Dryden's day a satire on his prologuing-propensities in The Rehearsal by Milliers, Duke of Buckingham. Dryden's habit of introducing two prologues and employing several characters is parodied in a scene in which the poet Bayes is instructing his players:

"Bayes.- For you must know there is, in nature, but two ways of making very good Prologues. The one is by civility, by insinuation, good language, and all that, to ----- a ----- in a manner, steal your plaudits from the courtesie of the Auditors; the other, by making use of some certain personal things, which may keep a hank upon such censuring persons, as cannot otherways, A gad, in nature, be hindered from being too free with their tongues. To which end, my first Prologue is, that I come out in a long black Veil, and a great Huge Hang-man behind me, with a Furr'd cap, and his Sword drawn; and there tell'm plainly, that if, out of goodnature, they will not like my Play, I gad, I'l e'en kneel down, and he shall cut my head off. Whereupon they all clapping -----





Smith. "I, But suppose they don't."

Then, says Bayes, he has made another Prologue in which is Thunder and Lightning.

Johnson. "That's greater: I'd rather stick to that."

Bayes. "Do you think so? I'll tell you then; tho there have been many witty Prologues written of late, yet, I think, you'll say this is a non pareillo: I'm sure nobody has hit on it yet. For here, Sir, I make my Prologue to be Dialogue."

We have dwelt upon the prologues of Jonson and Dryden as being representative examples in style and matter of the prologue of that era of English Literature, though they were only two out of a host of followers, too large to enumerate. Actors like Coleman and David Garrick wrote many. Addison and Steele left examples of their use of the form. Milton gave us a prologue to the Masque of Comus. Even Dr. Johnson tried his heavy hand at the dainty trifles with as cumborous a result as one might expect. Goldsmith, with all his suppleness of style seems to have been less successful with them and, we find to his graceful comedy, "Good Natured Man", a ponderous



prologue by Johnson beginning thus luguberously:

"Prest by the load of life, the weary mind  
Surveys the general toil of human kind."

Turning to a consideration of the speaker of the prologue, we learn, that, as in Greece, the custom was, among the earliest productions, for the recitation to be made by the dramatist himself. There are various plays in which "Poeta" is set down for the office. Gradually his representative was substituted, but all through the sixteenth century, the actor who spoke the lines was specially delegated for the part and, with very few exceptions, was not a character in the play. From the stage directions and side-notes of old manuscripts, it is made evident that the prologuist entered, announced by three blasts of trumpets, dressed in the long black cloak, that became a symbol of the office, and crowned by the bay-leaves that had been significant of authorship from the earliest times. Then a change of character such as the Rumour of Henry IV and the Machiavel of the Jew of Malta was introduced. The number of speakers increased as well. As early

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proceeds on Johnson and the following:

"First - the loss of life, the many men

there, the money, and the goods."

Second - the loss of the property of

the country, the land, the trees, the

water, the people, the animals, the birds,

the fish, the insects, the plants, the

whole of the world, the whole of the

universe, the whole of the creation, the

whole of the world, the whole of the

universe, the whole of the creation, the

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as 1615, in Heywood's *Four Prentices of London*, the induction is headed, "Enter three in black cloaks." Gradually the prologue assumed more and more of a dramatic nature, the dialogue being, as we saw in Jonson and in Beaumont and Fletcher, divided among several speakers.

In 1609, there is a record of the prologue to Jonson's *Every Woman in her Humor* being spoken by a female character. This was a distinct innovation as is evidenced by her first words: <sup>\*</sup>"Gantles of both sexes, and of all sorts, I am sent to bid ye welcome. I am but instead of a Prologue, for a she- Prologue is as rare as a usurer's alms." A little later, prologues were considered valuable mediums for exploiting a star's talents, and Nell Gwynn's lively recital of an epilogue is said to have been the cause of her advancement from playhouse to palace, Charles II being so enamoured of the performance. Women dramatists were now entering the lists and in the prologue to the *Wonder, a Woman Keeps a Secret*, by Mrs. Centlivre, is found an example of feminine use of invective. She writes:

\* Ben Jonson's *Every Woman in her Humor*.



"Our author fears the critics of the stage,  
Who, like barbarians, spare nor sex nor age;  
She trembles at those censors in the pit,  
Who thinks good nature shows a want of wit.  
Such malice, Oh! what Muse can undergo it?  
To save themselves they always damn the poet."

The subjects considered as legitimate material for treatment in the prologue were practically limitless. Those enumerated in the consideration of Dryden are fairly representative of the whole series. They included anything from compliment to castigation, from puns to politics, from prayer to profanity. They comprised essays on literary criticism, love ballads, delivery of personal spleen, party prejudice as well as complete one act plays with little relevance to the plot of the play. We get moreover many interesting details concerning the manners of the day, stage usages, properties, scenery and dress. M. de Grisy, in the preface to his *Histoire de la Comédie -Anglaise*, values them highly. He writes: "Les prologues et les épilogues qui ouvrent et ferment presque toutes





ces comédies nous ont, non moins que les dédicaces, fourni de précieux détails sur les auteurs et sur leur époque." "G.S.B." in his Study of the Prologue and Epilogue in English Literature comments upon the great quantity of illustrative matter for the use of the historian that is "reflected in, or may be extracted from these precocious and loquacious infants of letters."

As the art of prologue-writing reached its high-water mark with Dryden, so, with him, we begin to feel its decline. They<sup>prologues</sup> showed symptoms of deterioration before they were finally done away with as a formal foreword. The writers ceased to expend care upon them, the audience wearied of the necessary repetition and they died of neglect. According to Mr. Planché, the first play of importance to be given without a prologue, was the adaptation of an old comedy by Rowley, "A Woman never Vext", 1824. The omission was not marked by the manager until the final rehearsal when he demanded the prologue from the adapter. When assured that there was to be none, he cried, "a five act play and no prologue! Why, the audience will tear up the benches!" The non-



appearance of the time-honored figure was however not even noticed and, after this, little mention is made of that form, that should, as Garrick said,

"Precede the play in mournful verse,  
As undertakers stalk before the hearse;  
Whose doleful march may strike the hardened mind,  
And wake its feeling for the dead behind."

We are indebted to a custom that was in vogue when the prologues were at the height of popularity, for the number of examples of this interesting form that have come down to us. They were at that time, as Scott tells us, printed on singles leaves or broadsides and sold by the hawkers at the doors of the theatres. Dryden took care to preserve the prologues and epilogues of his own plays with the manuscripts and other copies exist in collections of literary curiosities called "Drolleries", such as the "Covent Garden Drollery" and the "Westminster Drollery". There are also several Spouter's Manuals, one of the quaintest of which is a collection by John Palmer entitled,





"The New Spouter's Companion, being a complete Theatrical Remembrancer and Universal Key to Theatrical Knowledge, containing all the favorite and most esteemed Prologues and Epilogues that have been written by distinguished Wits, to accompany approved Tragedies, Comedies, Operas, Farces, Pantomines and every other species of Theatrical Entertainment worthy of Notice." There is a foreword for "He who would become an Orator"; "Rules for expressing some of the Principal Passions", and an interesting collection of some hundred representative prologues and epilogues, among which are the Prologue "To the Belle's Stratagem", "To the School for Scandal" "To Much Ado about Nothing," and others.



## VII

The Modern Prologue.

Having attended in the last section, the final rites and obsequies of our prodigal prologue, perhaps there are those who will question this reappearance. Just when we think we are well rid of him, he has turned up like Banquo's ghost at the other end of the bench.

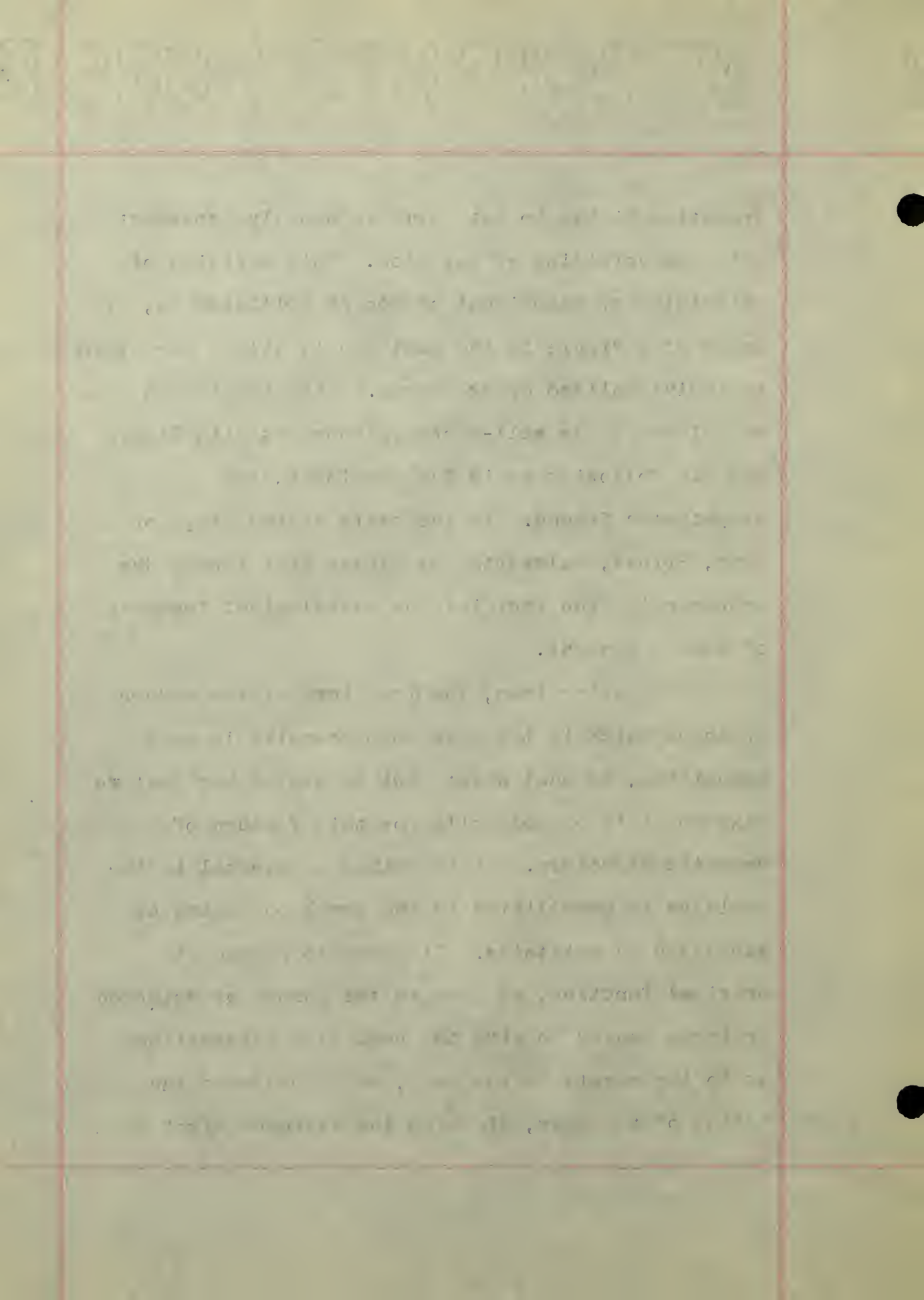
The prologue, which served as intermediary between playwright and audience, has divided its functions. That part of it which comprised the information necessary for furthering the action of the play has developed into what is technically known as exposition, has become an integral portion of the first act, as it was formerly with Aeschylus and Sophocles. The special function of the formal prologue, that which set forth the author's views of society or life in general, has been objectified into some character that serves as his mouthpiece. Especially is this the case in the Thesis play in which a succinct presentation of the ideas which the





dramatist wishes to set forth is equally important with the unfolding of the plot. This defining of principles or embodiment of social criticism is, by means of a figure in the cast who is little more than an individualized Greek chorus. With the French school he is the well-known *raisonneur*; with Pinero and his following he is the confidant, the sympathetic friend. In the casts of the plays of Shaw, Brieux, Galsworthy or Barker will appear the propagandist who typifies the sociological tendency of modern thought.

Taking then, the first form of the modern prologue which is the most comprehensive in such exposition, we must start out by explaining that we make no claim of modernity for this feature of dramatic structure. It is rather a reversal to the prologue as exemplified by the Greek poets and as expounded by Aristotle. It began to resume its original function, as soon as the formal or detached prologue ceased to give the requisite information as to the events in the saga, which preceded the action of the play, of which the audience might be



ignorant or forgetful. It became more and more a necessity as the complexity of the plot increased, but, so long as the formal prologue was expository in character, the office was divided between the prologue and the first act.

The prefatory character of the Elizabethan prologue called for the embodiment of the exposition in the first act and, being with them a comparatively new convention, they often handled it awkwardly. In many plays a simple conversation, giving the condition of affairs up to the time at which the author chooses to develop his plot, is all that is required to start the natural growth of the action. Most farces and many comedies are of this character, being almost devoid of expository matter. Some of the comedies of Shakespeare begin in this manner. In *Hamlet*, on the contrary, there is a solid block of exposition in the fifth scene in the speech of the Ghost. This is, as Mr. Archer points out, <sup>\*</sup>"dramatized exposition" in contrast to the undramatic exposition in Horatio's lecture in the first scene.

Every dramatic author has a certain amount

\* Archer, Play-making Chap. VI.





of information of past events that must be given the audience during the "two hours' traffic" of the stage. He may accomplish it by means of the formal prologue after the manner of Plautus, by means of a long soliloquy as Euripides, Shakespeare and others have done. He may put it into the swift movement of a "prologu<sup>al</sup> act" as Mr. Bon<sup>U</sup>cicault does or, finally, he may take the more usual and modern way of unfolding it gradually, as exemplified in Ibsen's Ghosts. Some where, some how, this information must be given.

Ibsen the great master craftsman, shows singular development in his use of prologuial matter. He has infinitely more story, as such, to get over to the audience than did the Greek dramatists; because, whereas they took a legend wholly or partially known to their spectator, Ibsen must convey to his an original story, which task he complicates even farther by choosing to reveal it at the moment of the development of its final catastrophe. He has given us no formal prologues. Exposition in his earlier plays is handled more crudely than his skill in other conventions would lead us to expect. In the Pillars of Society,

of information of such events that may be given the  
 evidence during the time covered, including the time  
 it was established if it was of the nature of a  
 crime and amount of time, or more or less  
 difficulty of solution, including the time  
 taken. The only one is that the latter amount of  
 "original" work is not connected with it, thereby, no  
 one can see the work and know how to do it  
 is probably, as mentioned in the book.  
 How many, some not, this is difficult to say.  
 There are most other countries, where  
 similar treatment is in use in professional work.  
 It has helped some, but, as usual, to feel that  
 to the degree that the time becomes longer, the  
 amount of work is almost equal to the time taken  
 to finish the work, (and that is why it is so  
 difficult to say, with such a small amount of  
 by working as usual) is at the moment of the  
 end of the first chapter. It has given us  
 formal program. The reason for this is  
 that it is not really then it is in order of  
 work, but in the sense of the

where much preliminary information must be supplied, he invents a sewing club of gossips, who relate to one of their number, that has conveniently been absent from the town, the mass of details that the audience must know. It is a very obvious device. In Rosmerholm, on the contrary, the expositional information is withheld until well into the third act, too long, in fact, because it thereby lessens the suspense and destroys the force of the final catastrophe.

Very different is his later masterly treatment of this feature of his craft, In Ghosts and in Hedda Gabler, for instance, there is a gradual revelation of the past. Information of happening after happening is given us just before it is needed for the action. It is like the unrolling of a carpet before a procession, never too far in advance, yet always supplied before the demand.

The prologue, either as exposition or as direct appeal, reached its lowest ebb in France at the time of the Théâtre Libre. In fact the light of its candle flickered so feebly it threatened to go out. Antoine and his followers cried for a "slice of life", and the cleaner cut the better. There





must be no hanging crust of the past, nor crumbs of the future. A window-curtain blows aside, we look in upon a household of human beings, not stage-puppets. We watch them laughing, weeping, loving, hating, living; dying; when we grow tired of the scene, we pull down the blinds. In *Les Corbeaux*, Becque, the leading exponent of this theory, fails to live up to his creed; for he introduces into the first act a long expositional speech by the mother to her daughters, who must have been conversant with the facts. In *La Parisienne*, however, he achieved as perfect an example of the expositionless drama, "la tranche de vie", as has ever been written.

Certain critics make the handling of exposition, the crucial test of the dramatist's powers. There are many other points on dramatic treatment, that call for as great technical ability as this one, but it is a fact that the skill in this regard has grown enormously. It was once the fashion to permit the parlormaid or the butler to discourse at length on family affairs. Letters read aloud, friends in a reminiscent mood, returned travellers were other familiar, if obvious, artifices. With the



elimination of the soliloquy and of the aside and the demand for less artificiality, the difficulty of the task has increased enormously. Pinero is a modern wizard of this feat, Sudermann another. In fact most of the modern masters of the art conduct this particular feature of the craft so cleverly that the information is projected insiduously into our consciousness without our being aware of the process.

In turning to the second form of the modern prologue, the formal address or the preliminary act that is frankly headed "prologue", with the possible exception of those cases in which it is used in a play of symbol or fantasy to evoke a mood or strike a note whereby the audience may attune their sentiments, the use of the prologue is in each instance a confession of weakness, a dodging of technical difficulties. If we will study the material offered us in these prologues, we will find that by a clever craftsman it could easily have been interwoven into the exposition of the first act. The only advantage it has is in visualizing rather than narrating the deed, but this is more than counter-balanced by the





corresponding loss in economy of attention, time and space. This theory is further substantiated by the fact that the greatest dramatists of the present generation do not employ it. Ibsen, as has been noted, eliminated it from his conventions.

Strindberg made use of it only in his Dream Play, which may easily be of the class excepted at the start. Maeterlinck, master magician of moods, secures his effects without such preludes. We find prologues in none of the dramas of Hauptmann, Sudermann, Galsworthy, Barker or Hervieu. Even the poetic dramas of the Irish school, in which one might more reasonably expect to find it, are barren of such form.

In the instants in which it is used by the better playwrights, it is for one of two reasons. Either it starts a suspense value by giving the keynote of the theme or plot, or else it is practically a one-act play emphasizing an action that is to have definite value later in this play, but which, by passage of time or of a series of happenings, is not so closely knit to the body of the play as the rest of the acts.



The second division has been common in plays in all lands. As soon as the necessity for demanding silence and attention from the audience was obviated Germany began to discard the address and to introduce a scene or situation, that should prelude the drama. Isabella, the princess of Messina, acts as her own prologue in Schiller's *Bride of Messina*, and she is followed in true Greek fashion by the chorus and semi-chorus; but this is a mere survival. A complete one-act play constitutes the prologue to the same author's *Maid of Orleans*; and another humorous play introduces the two plays, *Wallenstein* and the *Death of Wallenstein*. Goethe has given us in *Faust* one of the most beautiful and note-worthy prologues in the history of the drama.

In France, the detached prologue marked its decline from the time of Racine. Molière never uses it in his comedies, though such lyrical pieces as *Psyche*, *Les Amans Magnifiques* and *La Malade Imaginaire* have prologues in the form of ballads and music, thoroughly in character with the nature of the composition. Alex. Dumas perfected, if he did





not originate, that popular form of introductory act that displays in the childhood or youth of the hero or heroine some act that is to be significant in the later crises of his life. This is a usage that has come down to our own day. It is a special favorite in romantic drama and poetic plays. There is often in the melodramatic form a murder that must subsequently be expiated. It is murder in the prologues of Dumas' *Les Mohicans de Paris* and his *La Dame de Monsoreau*. There is murder, too, in the prologue of Gabriel Lambert, the last line of which, spoken by Louise, points very significantly to the dénouement of the play; "La loi punit de mort le contrefacteur."

In the well-known *Madame X*, by Alexandre Bisson, the author has adopted Dumas' method of portraying a situation, whose results or reactions shall be given in the play proper. In the prologue, we have the wife pleading for forgiveness, asking harshly what will become of her if she is turned out upon the world. The play pictures the tragic answer to her query. Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson



makes use of the expedient of the prologue in his drama, *The King*. He gives in it an incident in the life of the King that proves the turning point of his career.

A remarkable play, *The Great Galeotto*, by the chief exponent of modern Spanish drama, Josi Echegaray, has an especially effective prologue in soliloquy and dialogue that gives the theme of the play that follows. This use classifies the prologue with that first division, modern introductions that give the keynote of the theme or suggest the mood or spirit in which the subject is to be treated.

The Russian dramatist, Andreyeff, only lately becoming familiar to English audiences through translated editions of his works, prefixes prologues to two of his best known plays to fulfill precisely this function. In *Anathema*, an atmosphere of immensity is created into which is projected an ominous questioning of the ultimate purpose of life. His other play, *The Life of Man*, is introduced by a prologue<sup>\*</sup>, a Russian interpretation of the Seven Ages of Man, spoken by a mysterious Being in

\*Given in full in the Appendix.

...and the ... of the ... in the ...  
... the ... in the ...  
... the ... in the ...

... the ... in the ...  
... the ... in the ...  
... the ... in the ...  
... the ... in the ...  
... the ... in the ...  
... the ... in the ...

... the ... in the ...  
... the ... in the ...  
... the ... in the ...  
... the ... in the ...  
... the ... in the ...  
... the ... in the ...



Grey. Like the Greek chorus, he continues through the play commenting upon the actions of the Man whose life he is revealing to us. He is represented as wearing a shapeless grey robe, a grey scarf partly concealing in shadow his stern face. With firmly compressed lips, he speaks in a cold, passionless voice "like a hired lector reading with severe indifference the Book of Fate." He begins: "Look and listen, ye who have come hither for mirth and laughter. Lo, there will pass before you all the life of Man, with its dark beginning and its dark end. Hitherto non-existent, mysteriously hidden in infinite time, without thought or feeling, utterly unknown, he will mysteriously break through the barriers of non-existence and with a cry will announce the beginning of his brief life. In the night of non-existence will blaze up a candle, lighted by an unseen hand. This is the life of Man. Behold its flame. It is the life of Man." During each act, this Being in Grey stands in some shadowy corner of the room, holding his flickering candle, which, at the end, burned down, gives one last feeble flare and goes out.



There is a prologue to Chantecler, often omitted in production, in which Rostand, by means of the Hindu construction, gives the theme and has the manager order his scene. In Kismet, Knoblauch retains the atmosphere of the Oriental drama by a dialogue sung by a man and a woman and a soliloquy which translates the audience into the spirit of the piece before the rise of the curtain on the first act.\*

Percy Mackaye introduces his four act tragedy, Fenris, the Wolf, <sup>by</sup> with a Prologue in which the characters are Norweigen deities, destined to play human roles in the unfolding of the subsequent action. Another American playwright, Edward Sheldon gives by means of the prologue the spirit of his delightful play, Romance.

Still another use of the prologue that may be considered under the category of the fantastic drama, yet is practically in a class by itself, is in its connection with the popular modern form of dream plays. In these plays the prologue and the epilogue or final act are in reality a split fourth

\* Given in full in the Appendix





act, between them passes in review the dream or pageant to be painted. Notable examples of this division are the Phantom Rival of Molnar, Beulah Dix's The Road to Yesterday and the more recent play of modern life, Common Clay, by a Harvard student, Cleve Kincead.

The question of the legitimacy of the prologue is one for personal solution. Any potent theory of the drama must be founded on the best usage of the time. Aristotle did not lay down laws as to what should be but deduced conclusions from what had been done. So it has been down the line from Aristotle to Brunetière, Lope de Vega, Archer or Jones, as soon as a canon is pronounced universal, along will come some genius of the stamp of Shakespeare or Ibsen and break it. And the plays of the law-breakers persist, after the theories of the law-makers have rusted from disuse. Not that they were useless or incorrect in their day, but their sun had set. New standards had been set up from which new rules had to be derived.

So it has ever been with the prologue. The



dramatist has never been content to accept either the critic's condemnation of it, nor yet his commendation. When it has been thought convenient to produce an effect desired by him, he has employed it unstintingly. As we have seen its fortunes and its forms have varied. What place it will occupy in the new rhythmic drama or on the stage of the theatre of the new stage-craft, it is hard to predict. At the present, it is a contented prodigal, chatting loquaciously in the bosom of its family. For awhile, at any rate, it has come into its own.





## APPENDIX



## Appendix.

- |       |                 |   |
|-------|-----------------|---|
| I.    | Prologue to the | Agamemnon of Aeschylus.                                     |
| II.   | " " "           | Electra of Sophocles.                                       |
| III.  | " " "           | Hecuba of Euripides.  |
| IV.   | " " "           | Acharnians of Aristophanes.                                 |
| V..   | " " "           | Poenulus of Plautus.  |
| VI.   | " " "           | Heautontimorumenos of Terence.                              |
| VII.  | " "             | The Chester Mystery Plays.                                  |
| VIII. | " "             | the Morality Play, Everyman.                                |
| IX.   | " "             | The Generous Impostor, from the New<br>Spouter's Companion. |
| X..   | " "             | The Deuce is in Him by George Colman.                       |
| XI..  | " "             | Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare.                    |
| XII.  | " "             | The Rival Ladies by John Dryden.                            |
| XIII. | " "             | Kismet by Edward Knoblauch.                                 |
| XIV.  | " "             | The Life of Man by Leoned Andreyeff.                        |





Prologue to Agamemnon, of *Aeschylus*

Watchman.

I pray the gods deliv'rance from those toils,  
This year-long watch, which, prone on

Atreus' roof

With head ensconced in arm, dog-like, I keep,  
Marking the confluence of nightly stars;

And those bright potentates who bring to men  
Winter and summer, signal in the sky,

Both in their wane I view and when they rise.

And for the beacon's token now I watch,

The blaze of fire, bearing from Troy a tale,  
Tidings of capture; for so proudly hopes

A woman's heart, with manly counsel fraught.

Dew-drenched and restless is my nightly couch,

By dreams unvisited, for at my side,

In place of Sleep stands Fear, forbidding me,

Save in unquiet rest, my lids to close.

Then when I think to chant a strain, or whistle,

(Such against sleep my tuneful counter-charm)

THE HISTORY OF THE

CHAPTER

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Moaning, I wail the sorrows of this house,  
Not wisely governed as in days of old.

(He suddenly beholds the beacon-light and starts  
to his feet.)

But now, glad respite from these toils be mine,  
Since fire, joy's herald, through the darkness  
gleams.

Hail lamp of night, forth shining like the day,  
Of many a festive dance in Argos' land,  
Through joy at this event, the harbinger.

Hurrah! Hurrah! To Agamemnon's queen,  
Thus with shrill cry I give th' appointed sign,  
That from her couch up-rising with all speed,  
She in the palace jubilant may lift  
The joyous shout, to gratulate this torch,  
If Ilion's citadel in truth is ta'en,  
As, shining forth, this beacon-fire proclaims.

The joyous prelude I myself will dance,  
For I shall score good fortune to my lords,  
Now that this torch hath cast me triple six.

1

... I will not say that it is a...

... I have covered in the past...

... the subject of the ... (to be continued)

... I have covered in the past ... (to be continued)

... I have covered in the past ... (to be continued)

... I have covered in the past ... (to be continued)

... I have covered in the past ... (to be continued)



Well! be it mine, when comes this mansion's lord,  
 With this my hand his much-loved hand to grasp!

The rest I speak not; o'er my tongue hath passed  
 An ox with heavy tread: the house itself,  
 Had it a voice, would tell the tale full clear;  
 And I, with those who know, am fain to speak,  
 With others, who know nothing, I forget.

and the other side of the road, and the other side of the road.

There is a small stream in the middle of the road.

The road is very narrow, and the other side of the road.

There is a small stream in the middle of the road.

The road is very narrow, and the other side of the road.

There is a small stream in the middle of the road.

The road is very narrow, and the other side of the road.

Prologue to Electra, of *Sophocles*.

(The Oxford Translation.)

ATTENDANT. O son of Agamemnon who once commanded the army at Troy, now mayest thou here present behold those things, for which thou were ever eagerly longing. For this is the ancient Argos, which thou didst desire, the grove of the frenzy-stricken daughter of Inachus, and this, Orestes, the Lycaean forum of the wolf-slaying god; but this on the left, the renowned temple of Juno; and for the place whither we are arrived, assure thyself thou seest the all-opulent Mycenae: and this the habitation of the Pelopidae teeming with murders, whence I formerly, having received thee from thine own sister, bore and rescued thee from thy father's bloody fate, and nourished thee thus far onwards in thy youth, as an avenger of his murder to thy sire. Now therefore, Orestes, and thou, Pylades, dearest of foreign friends, what it is needful to do we must quickly consider, since already the brilliant light





of the sun wakes clear the morning carols of the birds, and the dark night has gone from heaven. Ere therefore any of the inhabitants walk forth from his dwelling, we must confer in counsel, since we are come to that point where there is no longer any season for delay, but the crisis for action.

ORESTES. O most beloved of serving-men, what evident proofs showest thou that thou art good towards us: for even as a generous horse, although he be aged, in danger has not lost his spirit, but pricks his ears upright, even so thou both urgest us forward and art among the first to follow us. Wherefore my determinations will I unfold; and do thou, lending an alert attention to my words, if in aught I miss of what is fitting, set me right. For when I came a suppliant to the Pythian oracle, that I might learn in what way I should exact justice for my father from his murderers, Phoebus gave me an answer, such as thou presently shalt hear: "That in person, alike unfurnished with armour and with martial host, by craft I should steal the lawful slaughter of mine hand." Since then we have heard



such an oracle as this, do thou entering, when opportunity shall introduce thee, into this house, learn all that there is doing, that being informed thou mayest tell us sure tidings. For fear not that with both thine own age and the long lapse of time they shall recognise thee, or even suspect thee thus tricked out. But make use of some such tale as this, that thou art a Phocian, stranger, coming from Phanoteus, since he is the chiefest of the foreign allies they have. But announce, adding an oath, that Orestes is dead by a violent death, having been tumbled from a wheeled chariot car at the Pythian games. So let thy story stand. But we having, as he enjoined, first crowned my father's sepulchre with libations and locks cropped from my head, will then come back again, bearing in our hands a brazen-sided vessel, which thou also knowest is somewhere hidden among the brushwood, that cheating them with words we may bring them pleasant tidings, how that my body is perished, already consumed by fire and reduced to ashes. For what does this pain me, when, dead in words, in deeds





I shall be safe, and bear away renown? I indeed think no expression ill-omened which gain attends. For already have I frequently seen the wise also in story falsely dying: then afterwards, when they shall again have returned home, they have been the more honoured. As I presume that I also, coming to life subsequently to this report, shall yet blaze forth, as a star, to my foes. But O land of my forefathers, and ye its gods indigenious, welcome me as prosperous in this my journey; and thou too, O abode of my ancestors, for, urged by an impulse from heaven, I come to purge thee by my just revenge: then dismiss me not in dishonour from this my country, but (make me) master of my wealth and the restorer of my house. This now have I said, but, old man, be it at once thy care, having gone, to execute with caution thy duty, but we will go forth, for it is the season; which indeed is to mankind the greatest arbiter of every act.

ELECTRA. Alas! ah me unhappy!



AT. In sooth methought I heard from the door  
some female servant inside heaving a suppressed sigh,  
my son.

OR. Can it be the hapless Electra? wilt thou we  
tarry here and listen to her cries?

AT. By no means. Let us attempt to execute nothing  
prior to the commands of Loxias, and from these to  
commence our course, pouring out the libations to  
thy father, for this brings us both victory and  
strength in action.

EL. O holy light, and air that sharest equal space  
with earth, how many a strain of mournful dirges,  
how many a blow against my bleeding breast hast thou  
witnessed for me, when murky night shall have retired!  
But for my livelong nights---the hateful couches of  
this house of woes are conscious: How oft I mourn  
mine unhappy sire, whom in a foreign country gory  
Mars entertained not, but my mother, and Agisthus  
the partner of her bed, lop off his head with  
murderous axe, as wood-cutters an oak. And for all  
this no pity is felt by any other save me, when thou,





my father, hast perished so disgracefully and  
piteously. But never then will I desist from  
laments and bitter cries, as long as I look on  
the all-glowing beams of the stars, as I look on  
this daylight; so as not, like some nightingale  
that has lost her young, to pour forth to all  
mine echo inviting to shrill lament before these  
gates of my native home. O abode of Pluto and  
of Proserpine, O nether Mercury and lawful Curse,  
and ye venerable children of the gods, ye Furies,  
who regard them that unjustly perish, them that  
by stealth usurp another's bed, come ye, lend aid,  
avenge the murder of our father, and to me send my  
brother, for alone I have no longer strength to  
weigh up the burden of affliction that is in the  
opposite scale.



Prologue of the Hecuba of Euripides.

(Everyman's Edition)

The Ghost of Polydore.

Leaving the cavern of the dead, and gates  
Of darkness, where from all the gods apart  
Dwells Pluto, come I Polydore, the son  
Of Hecuba from royal Cisseus sprung,  
And Priam, who, when danger threatened Troy,  
Fearing his city by the Grecian arms  
Would be laid low in dust, from Phrygia's realm  
In privacy conveyed me to the house  
Of Polymestor, of his Thracian friend,  
Who tills the Chersonesus' fruitful soil,  
Ruling a nation famed for generous steeds;  
But secretly with me, abundant gold  
My father sent, that his surviving children  
Might lack no sustenance, if Ilion's walls  
Should by the foe be levelled with the ground.  
I was the youngest of all Priam's sons,





By stealth he therefore sent me from the realm;  
Nor could my feeble arm sustain the shield,  
Or launch the javelin; but while yet entire  
Each ancient landmark on our frontiers stood,  
The turrets of the Phrygian state remained  
Unshaken, and my brother Hector's spear  
Prospered in battle; nurtured by the man  
Of Thrace, my father's friend, I, wretched youth,  
Grew like a vigorous scion. But when Troy,  
When Hector failed, when my paternal dome  
Was from its basis rent, and Priam's self,  
My aged father, at the altar bled  
Which to the gods his pious hands had reared,  
Butchered by curst Achilles' ruthless son;  
Me, his unhappy guest, my father's friend  
Slew for the sake of gold, and having slain,  
Plunged me into the sea, that he might keep  
Those treasures in his house. My breathless corse,  
In various eddies by the rising waves  
Of ocean tost, lies on the craggy shore,  
Unwept, unburied. But by filial love  
For Hecuba now prompted, I ascend



A disembodied ghost, and thrice have seen  
The morning dawn, to Chersonesus land,  
Since my unhappy mother came from Troy.  
But all the Grecian army, in their ships,  
Here anchoring on this coast of Thrace remain  
Inactive; for appearing on his tomb  
Achilles, Peleus' son, restrained the troops,  
Who homeward else had steered their barks, and  
claims

Polyxena my sister, as a victim  
Most precious at his sepulchre to bleed;  
And her will he obtain, nor will his friends  
Withhold the gift; for fate this day decrees  
That she shall die: My mother must behold  
Two of her slaughtered children's corpses, mine,  
And this unhappy maid's---that in a tomb  
I may be lodged, where the firm beach resists  
The waves, I to her servant will appear,  
Since from the powers of hell I have obtained  
The privilege of honourable interment,  
And that a mother's hand these rites perform:  
I shall accomplish what my soul desired.





But on the aged Hecuba's approach,  
Far hence must I retreat; for from the tent  
Of Agamemnon she comes forth, alarmed  
By my pale spectre. O my wretched mother,  
How art thou torn from princely roofs to view  
This hour of servitude! what sad reverse  
Of fortune! some malignant god hath balanced  
Thy present misery 'gainst thy former bliss.



Prologue to The Acharnians of *Aristophanes*.

How many things there are to cross and vex me,  
My comforts I compute at four precisely,  
My griefs and miseries at a hundred thousand.  
Let's see what there has happened to rejoice me  
With any real kind of joyfulness;  
Come, in the first place I set down five talents,  
Which Cleon vomited up again and refunded;  
There I rejoiced; I loved the knights for that;  
'Twas nobly done, for the interests of all  
Greece,

But again I suffered cruelly in the theatre  
A tragical disappointment---There was I  
Gaping to hear old *Æschylus*, when the Herald  
Called out, "Theognis, bring your chorus  
forward."

Imagine what my feelings must have been!  
But then *Dexitheus* pleased me coming forward  
And singing his Boeotian melody:  
But next came *Chæris* with his music truly,  
That turned me sick, and killed me very nearly.

THE HISTORY OF THE

How many things there are to be seen and

to be done, I cannot say.

My friends and I went to the theatre.

Let's see what they had to say.

First, they said of the theatre:

Now, on the first night I saw the play.

There were many who were not.

There I was; I found the play.

'Now, my dear, for the interest of all

people,

but when I entered early in the theatre

I found the theatre empty.

There I was, and the theatre

was empty, and the theatre

was empty.

There was no one in the theatre.

There was no one in the theatre.

There was no one in the theatre.

There was no one in the theatre.

There was no one in the theatre.



But never in my lifetime, man nor boy,  
Was I so vexed as at this present moment;  
To see the Pnyx, at this time of the morning,  
Quite empty, when the Assembly should be full.  
There are our citizens in the market-place,  
Lounging and talking, shifting up and down  
To escape the painted twine that ought to sweep  
The shoal of them this way; not even the  
Presidents  
Arrived---they're always last, crowding  
and jostling  
To get the foremost seat; but as for peace  
They never think about it---Oh, poor  
country!  
As for myself, I'm always the first man.  
Alone in the morning, here I take my place,  
Here I contemplate, here I stretch my legs;  
I think and think---I don't know what to think.  
I draw conclusions and comparisons,  
I ponder, I reflect, I pick my nose,  
I make a stink---I make a metaphor,  
I fidget about, and yawn and scratch myself;



Looking in vain to the prospect of the fields,  
 Loathing the city, longing for a peace,  
 To return to my poor village and my farm,  
 That never used to cry "Come buy my charcoal!"  
 Nor, "Buy my oil!" nor "Buy my anything!"  
 But gave me what I wanted, freely and fairly,  
 Clear of all cost, with never a word of buying,  
 Or such buy-words. So here I'm come, resolved  
 To bawl, to abuse, to interrupt the speakers,  
 Whenever I hear a word of any kind  
 Except for an immediate peace. Ah there!  
 The Presidents at last; see, there they come!  
 All scrambling for their seats---I told you so!

HERALD. Move forward there! Move forward  
 all of ye

Further! within the consecrated ground.

AMPHITHEUS. Has anybody spoke?

HER. Is anybody

Prepared to speak?

AMP. Yes I.

HER. Who are you and what?

AMP. Amphytheus the demigod.





HER. Not a man?

AMP. No, I'm immortal; for the first

Amphitheus

Was born of Ceres and Triptolemus,  
His only son was Keleus, Keleus married  
Phænarate my grandmother, Lykinus  
My father, was their son; that's proof enough  
Of the immortality in our family.

The gods moreover have dispatched me here  
Commissioned specially to arrange a peace  
Betwixt this city and Sparta---notwithstanding  
I find myself rather in want at present  
Of a little ready money for my journey.  
The magistrates won't assist me.

HER. Constables!

AMP. OKeleus and Triptolemus, don't  
forsake me!

DIC. You Presidents, I say! you exceed  
your powers;

You insult the Assembly, dragging off a man  
That offered to make terms and give us peace.

HER. Keep silence there.

† 29127-27130 = 0? ; 2913001 = 1 ; 2913002 = 2913003

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DIC. By Jove, but I won't be  
silent,  
Except I hear a motion about peace.

HER Ho there! the Ambassadors from the  
King of Persia.

DIC. What King of Persia? what Ambassadors?  
I'm sick of foreigners and foreign animals,  
Peacocks and coxcombs and Ambassadors.

HER. Keep silence there.

DIC. What's here? What dress  
is that?  
In the name of Ecbatanta! What does it mean?

AMB. You sent us when Euthymenes was  
Archon,  
Some few years back, Ambassadors to Persia,  
With an appointment of two drachmas each  
For daily maintenance.

DIC. Alas, poor drachmas!

AMB. 'Twas no such easy service, I can  
tell you,  
No trifling inconvenience to be dragged  
Along those dusty dull Caystrian plains,

By your, O. I. Smith

1917

Dear Sir,

I have a notice about your...

and it is about the...

of the...

and it is about the...

and it is about the...

and it is about the...

and it is about the...

and it is about the...

Yours...

and it is about the...

and it is about the...

Yours...

and it is about the...

and it is about the...

and it is about the...

and it is about the...

and it is about the...

Yours...

and it is about the...

and it is about the...



Smothered with cushions in the travelling chariots,  
Obliged to lodge at night in our pavilions,  
Jaded and hacked to death.

DIC. My service then  
Was an easy one, you think! on guard all night,  
In the open air, at the outposts, on a mat.

AMB. . . . . At our reception we were forced  
to drink  
Strong luscious wine in cups of gold and crystal . .

DIC. O rock of Athens! sure thy very stones  
Should mutiny at such open mockery!

AMB (in continuation)

. . . . with the barbarians 'tis the test of  
manhood.

There the great drinkers are the greatest men . . .

DIC. As debauchees and coxcombs are with us.

AMB. (in continuation)

. . . . In the fourth year we reached the royal residence,

But found the Sovereign absent on a progress,  
Gone with his army to the Golden Mountains,  
To take his ease, and purge his royal person;



There he remained eight months.

DIC.

When did he close.

His course of medicine?

AMB. With the full of the moon

He rose, and left his seat, returning homeward;

There he admitted us to an audience,

And entertained us at a royal banquet

With a service of whole oxen baked in crust.

DIC. Oxen in crust! what lies, what trumpery  
Did ever any mortal hear the like?

AMB. Besides they treated us with a curious bird,  
Much bigger than our own Cleonymus.

'Tis called the Chousibus.

DIC.

Ay, by that same token

We're choused of our two drachmas.

AMB.

Finally,

We've brought you here a nobleman, Shamartabas

By name, by rank and office the King's Eye.

DIC. God send a crow to pick it out, I say,  
And yours the Ambassador's into the bargain!

HER. Let the King's Eye come forward.

DIC.

Hercules!





What's here? an eye for the head of a ship!

what point,

What headland is he waathering? what's your course?

What makes you steer so steadily and so slowly?

AMB. Come now, Shamartabas, stand forth; declare  
The King's intentions to the Athenian people.

(SHAMARTABAS here utters some words,  
which Orientalists have supposed to  
be the common formula prefixed to  
the edicts of the Persian Monarch---

Iartaman exarksan apissonai satra)

AMB. You understand it?

DIC. No, by Jove, not I.

AMB. (to DICAEPOLIS) He says the King intends  
to send us gold.

(to SHAMARTABAS) Explain about the gold; speak  
more distinctly.

SHAMARTABAS. Sen gooly Jaonau aphooly chest.

DIC. Well, that's distinct enough!

HER What does he say?

DIC. That it's a foolish jest for the Ionians  
To imagine that the King would send them gold.

AMB. No, No!--He's telling ye of chests full  
of gold.

That's what we want for the rest of the world!

And that's

and that's in the situation of the world?

And that's in the situation of the world?

And that's in the situation of the world?

And that's in the situation of the world?

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And that's in the situation of the world?

DIC. What chests? you're an impostor.--

Stand away.

Keep off; and let me alone to question him.

(to SHAMARTABAS)

You Sir, you Persian! answer me distinctly  
And plainly, in resence of this fist of mine;  
On pain of a royal purple bloody nose.

Will the King send us gold, or will he not?

(SHAMARTABAS shakes his head)

Have our Ambassadors bamboozled us?

(SHAMARTABAS nods)

These fellows nod to us in the Grecian fashion;  
They're some of our own people, I'll be bound.  
One of those eunuchs there I'm sure I know:  
I'm positive it's Cleisthenes the Siburtian.  
How durst you, you baboon, with such a beard,  
And your designing wicked rump close shaved,  
To pass yourself upon us for a eunuch?  
And who's this other? Sure enough it's Strato!

HER. Silence there! Keep your seats!

The Senate have invited the King's Eye  
To feast with them in the Prytaneum.

201. And observe you're an impostor.--

Stand back.

Keep it; and let me alone to question him.

(To himself.)

And Sir, you should be more obliging.

Two things, in answer to this first of them;

of which a third might follow.

First, the king was no more, he died in 1701.

(To himself.)

Now my dear friend, I am obliged to you.

(To himself.)

There's nothing more to be said in this business.

That's all of our dear brother, I'll be sworn.

And of those things that I'm sure I know.

The positive of this business is this.

That the king, you know, with such a name,

and the king's name, was never known.

And now, I'm sure, you're for a moment.

And now, I'm sure, you're for a moment.

And now, I'm sure, you're for a moment.

And now, I'm sure, you're for a moment.

And now, I'm sure, you're for a moment.



DIC. There---

An't it enough to drive one mad? to drive one  
To hang himself? to be kept here in attendance,  
Working myself into a strangury;  
Whilst every door flies open to these fellows.  
But I'll do something desperate and decided.  
Where is Amphitheus got to?

AMP.                      Here am I.

DIC. There---Take you these eight drachmas  
on my part,  
And make a separate peace for me with Sparta,  
For me, my wife and children and maidservant  
And you--Go on with your embassies and fooleries.

HER. Theorus, our ambassador into Thrace,  
Returned from King Sitalces!

THEO.                      Here am I.

DIC. More coxcombs called for! Here's  
another coming.

THEO. We should not have remained so long in  
Thrace. . . .

DIC. If you hadn't been overpaid I know you  
wouldn't.



THEO. But for the snow, which covered all  
 the country,  
 And buried up the roads, and froze the rivers.  
 'Twas singular this change of weather happened  
 Just when Theognis here, our frosty poet,  
 Brought out his tragedy. We passed our time  
 In drinking with Sitalces. He's your friend,  
 Your friend and lover, if there ever was one,  
 And writes the name of Athens on his walls,  
 His son, your new-made fellow-citizen,  
 Had wished to have been enrolled in proper form  
 At the Apaturian festival; and meanwhile,  
 During his absence, earnestly desires  
 That the Apaturian sausages may be sent to him.  
 He is urgent with his father to befriend  
 His newly adopted countrymen; and in fine  
 Sitalces has been so far worked upon,  
 He has sworn at last his solemn Thracian oath,  
 Standing before the sacrifice, to send  
 Such an army, he said, that all the Athenian people  
 Shall think that there's a flight of locusts coming.  
 DIC. Then hang me if I believe a word about it,





Except their being locusts; that seems likely.

THEO. And now he has sent some warriors  
from a tribe  
The fiercest in all Thrace.

DIC. Well, come---That's fair.  
HER. The Thracians that came hither with  
Theorus!

Let them come forward!

DIC. What the plague are these?  
THEO. The Odomantian army.

DIC? The Odomantians?  
Thracians? and what has brought them here from Thrace  
So strangely equipt, disguised, and circumcised?

THEO. These are a race of fellows, if you'd  
hire 'em,  
Only at a couple of drachmas daily pay;  
With their light javelins, and their little bucklers,  
They'd worry and skirmish over all Bœotia.

DIC. Two drachmas for those scarecrows! and  
our seamen  
What would they say to it?---left in arrears,  
Poor fellows, that are our support and safeguard.

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THEY WERE THE FIRST TO BE SEEN.

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Out, out upon it! I'm a plundered man.  
 I'm robbed and ruined here with the Odomantians.  
 They're seizing upon my garlic.

THEO. (to the THRACIANS) Oh, for shame,  
 Let the man's garlic alone. You shabby fellow,  
 You countryman, take care what you're about;  
 Don't venture near them when they're primed with  
 garlic.

DIC. You magistrates, have you the face to  
 see it,  
 With your own eyes---your fellow citizen  
 Here, in the city itself, robbed by barbarians?  
 But I forbid the Assembly. There's a change  
 In the heaven! I felt a drop of rain! I'm witness!

HER. The Thracians must withdraw, to attend  
 again

The first of next month. The Assembly is closed.

DIC. Lord help me, what a luncheon have I lost!  
 But there's Amphiheus coming back from Sparta.  
 Welcome Amphiheus!

AMP. I'm not welcome yet,  
 There are the Acharnians pursuing me!





DIC. How so?

AMP. I was coming here to bring the  
treaties,

But a parcel of old Acharnians smelt me out,  
Case-hardened, old, inveterate, hard-handed  
Veterans of Marathon, hearts of oak and iron,  
Slingers and smiters. They bawled out and bellowed:  
"You dog, you villain! now the vines are ruined,  
You're come with treaties, are you?" Then they  
stopped,

Huddling up handfuls of great slinging stones  
In the lappets of their cloaks, and I ran off,  
And they came driving after me pell-mell,  
Roaring and shouting.

DIC. Aye, why let them roar!  
You've brought the treaties?

AMP. Aye, three samples of 'em;  
This here is a five years' growth, taste it and try.

DIC. Don't like it!

AMP. Eh?

DIC. Don't like it; it won't do;  
There's an uncommon ugly twang of pitch,



A touch of naval armament about it.

AMP. Well, here's a ten years' growth, may  
suit you better

DIC. No, neither of them. There's a sort  
of sourness

Here in this last, a taste of acid embassies,  
And vapid allies turning to vinegar.

AMP. But here's a truce of thirty years entire,  
Warranted sound.

DIC. O Bacchus and the Bac-  
chanals!

This is your sort! here's nectar and ambrosia!  
Here's nothing about providing three days' rations;  
It says, "Do what you please, go where you will."  
I choose it, and adopt it, and embrace it,  
For sacrifice and for my private drinking.  
In spite of all the Acharnians, I'm determined  
To remove out of the reach of wars and mischief,  
And keep the feast of Bacchus in my farm.

AMP. And I'll run off to escape from those  
Acharnians.





Prologue of Poenulus; The Young Carthaginian, by  
Plautus. Translated by Riley; George Bell and Sons,  
London. 1910.

I have a mind to imitate the Achilles of Aristarchus: from that Tragedy I'll take for myself the opening: "Be silent, and hold your tongue, and give attention." The head-manager it is who bids you listen, that with a good grace they may be seated on the benches, both those who have come hungry and those who have come well filled. You who have eaten, by far the most wisely have you done: you who have not eaten, do you be filled with Play. But he who has something ready for him to eat, 'tis really great folly in him, for our sakes, to have to sit fasting. Rise up, cryer! bespeak attention among the people: I'm now waiting to see if you know your duty. Exercise your voice, by means of which you subsist and find your clothes; for unless you do cry out, in your silence starvation will be creeping upon you. Well, now sit down again, that you may earn double wages. Heaven grant success! do you obey my commands. Let no worn-out debauchee be sitting in the front of the stage, nor let the lictor or his rods be noisy in the least; and let no seat-keeper be walking about before the people's faces, nor be showing any to their seats, while the actor is on the stage. Those who have been sleeping too long



at home in idleness, it's right for them now to stand contentedly, or else let them master their drowsiness. Don't let slaves be occupying the seats, that there may be room for those who are free; or else let them pay down the money for their places; if that they cannot do, let them be off home, and escape a double evil, lest they be variegated both here with scourges, and with thongs at home, if they've not got things in due order when their masters come home. Let nurses keep children, baby-bantlings, at home, and let no one bring them to see the Play; lest both they themselves may be athirst, and the children may die with hunger; and that they mayn't be squealing about here, in their hungry fits, just like kids. Let the matrons see the piece in silence, in ~~silence~~ laugh, and let them refrain from screaming here with their shrill voices; their themes for gossip let them carry off home, so as <sup>not</sup> to be an annoyance to their husbands both here and at home. And And, as regards the managers of the performance, let not the palm of victory be given to any player wrongfully, nor by reason of favour let any be driven out of doors, in order that the inferior may be preferred to the





good ones. And this, too, besides, which I had almost forgotten: while the performance is going on, do you, lacqueys, make an onset on the cookshops; now, while there's an opportunity, now while the tarts are smoking hot, hasten there. These injunctions, which have been given as the manager's command, Heaven prosper them! troth now, let every one remember for himself. Now, in his turn, I wish to go back to the plot, that you may be equally knowing with myself. Its site, its limits, its boundaries I'll now lay down; for that purpose I have been appointed surveyor. But, unless it's troublesome, I wish to give you the name of this Comedy: but if it is an annoyance, I'll tell you still, since I have leave of those who have the management. This Comedy is called the "Carthaginian;" in the Latin, Plautus has called it "the Pulse-eating Kinsman." You have the name, then; now hear the rest of the story; for here will this plot be judged of by you. Its own stage is the proper place for every plot; you are the critics; I pray you lend attention. There were two cousins-german, Carthaginians, of a very high and very wealthy family. One of them is still alive, the



other's dead. The more confidently do I inform you of this, because the undertaker told me so, who anointed him for the pile. But the only son there was of that old man who died, being separated from his father, was stolen at Carthage when seven years old, six years, in fact, before his father died. When he saw that his only son was lost to him, he himself, from grief, fell sick; he made this cousin-german of his his heir; he himself departed for Acheron without taking leave.

The person who stole the child, carried him off to Calydon, and sold him here to a certain rich old man for his master, one desirous of children, but a hater of women. This old man without knowing it, bought the son of his host, that same child, and adopted him as his own son, and made him his heir when he himself departed this life. This young man is dwelling here in this house. (Pointing to the house of Agobastocles.)

Once more do I return to Carthage. If you want to give any commission, or anything to be managed- unless a person gives the money, he will be mistaken; but he who does give it will be very much more mistaken. But this father's cousin of his at Carthage, the old man





who is still alive, had two daughters. The one when in her fifth year, the other in her fourth, were lost, together with their nurse, from the walks in the suburbs.

The person who kidnapped them, carried them off to Anactorium, and sold them all both nurse and girls, for ready money, to a man (if a Procurer is a man) the most accursed of men, as many as the earth contains ; but do you yourself now form a conjecture what sort of man it is whose name is Lycus. He removed, not long ago, from Anactorium, where he formerly lived, to Calydon here, for the sake of his business. He dwells in that house. (pointing to the house of Lycus) This young man is dying distractedly in love with one of them, his kins-woman , not knowing that fact; Neither is he aware who she is, nor has he ever touched her (so much does the Procurer hamper him); neither has he hitherto ever had any improper connexion with her, nor ever taken her home to his house; nor has that Procurer been willing to send her there. Because he sees he is in love, he wishes to touch this man for a good haul. A certain Captain, who is desperately in love with her, is desirous to buy this younger one to



be his mistress. But their father, the Carthaginian since he lost them, has been continually seeking them in every quarter, by land and sea. When he has entered any city, at once he seeks out all the courtesans, wherever each of them is living; he gives her gold, and prolongs the night in his enquiries; after that he asks whence she comes, of what country, whether she was made captive or kidnapped, born of what family, who her parents were. So diligently and so skilfully does he seek for his daughters. He knows all languages, too but, though he knows them, he pretends not to know them: what need is there of talking? He is a Carthaginian all over. He, in the evening of yesterday came into harbour here on board ship. The father of these girls, the same is the father's cousin of this young man. Now d'ye take this? If you do take it, draw it out: take care not to break it asunder; pray, let it proceed. (Moving as if to go.) Dear me! I had almost forgotten to say the rest. He who adopted this young man as his own son, the same was the guest of that Carthaginian, this old man's father. He will come here to-day, and discover his daughters here,





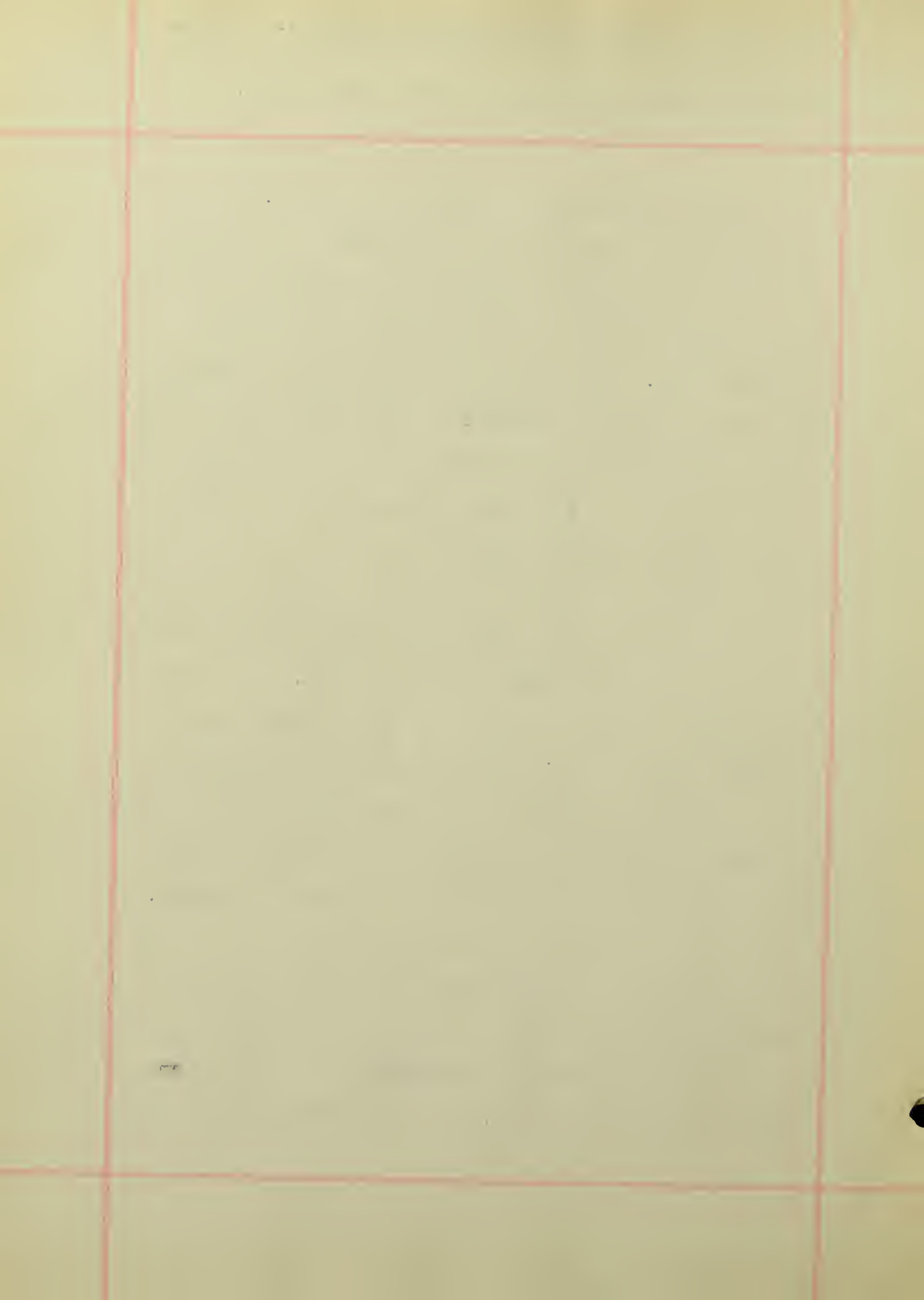
and this person, his cousin's son, as indeed I've learnt. He, I say, who'll come to-day, will find his daughters and this his cousin's son. But after this, farewell! - attend; I'm off; I now intend to become another man. As to what remains, some others remain who'll explain all to you. I'll go and dress. With kindly feelings do you then recognize me. Farewell! and give me your aid, that Salvation may prove propitious to you.



Prologue of HEAUTONTIMORUMENOS by Terence. Trans.

by Riley; Harper and Brothers, New York, 1882.

Lest it should be a matter of surprise to any one of you, why the Poet has assigned to an old man a part that belongs to the young, that I will first explain to you; and then, the reason for my coming I will disclose. An entire Play from an entire Greek one, the Heautontimorumenos, I am to-day about to represent, which from a two-fold plot has been made one, I have shown that it is new, and what it is: next I would mention who it was that wrote it, and whose in Greek it is, if I did not think that the greater part of you are aware. Now, for what reason I have learned this part, in a few words I will explain. The Poet intended me to be a Pleader, not the Speaker of a Prologue; your decision he asks, and has appointed me the advocate; if this advocate can avail as much by his oral powers as he has excelled in inventing. happily, who composed this speech which I am about to recite. For as to malevolent rumors spreading abroad that he has mixed together many Greek Plays while writing a few Latin ones, he does not deny that is the case, and that he does not repent of so doing; and he affirms that he will do so again. He has the example of good





Poets; after which example he thinks it is allowable for him to do what they have done. Then, as to a malevolent old Poet saying that he has suddenly applied himself to dramatic pursuits, relying on the genius of his friends, and not his own natural abilities; on that your judgment, your opinion, will prevail. Wherefore I do entreat you all, that the suggestions of our antagonists may not avail more than those of our favorers. Do you be favorable; grant the means of prospering to those who afford you the means of being spectators of new Plays; those, I mean, without faults: that he may not suppose this said in his behalf who lately made the public give way to a slave as he ran along in the street; why should he take a madman's part? About his faults he will say more when he brings out some other new ones, unless he puts an end to his caviling. Attend with favorable feelings; grant me the opportunity that I may be allowed to act a quiet Play in silence; that the servant everlastingly running about, the angry old man, the gluttonous parasite, the impudent sharper, and the procurer, may not have always to be performed by me with the utmost expense of voice, and the great-



est exertion. For my sake come to the conclusion that this request is fair, that so some portion of my labor may be abridged. For nowadays, those who write new Plays do not spare an aged man. If there is any piece requiring exertion, they come running to me; but if it is a light one, it is taken to another Company. In the present one the style is pure.

Do you make proof, what, in each character, my ability can effect. If I have never greedily set a high price upon my skill, and have come to the conclusion that this is my greatest gain, as far as possible to be subservient to your convenience, establish in me a precedent, that the young may be anxious rather to please you than themselves.





Prologue to The Chester Plays.

(Edited by Thomas Wright and printed by the  
Shakespeare Society, London, 1843.)

Reverende lordes and ladyes all,  
That at this tyme here assembled bee,  
By this message understande you shall  
That some tymes there was mayor of this citie  
Sir John Arnway, knyghte, who moste worthilye  
Contented hymselfe to sett out in playe  
The devise of one Done Rondall, moonke of  
Chester Abbey.

This moonke, moonke-like in Scriptures  
well seene,

In storyes travilled with the beste sorte,  
In pagentes set fourth apparently to all  
eyne

The olde and newe testament, with livelye



comforth,  
 Interminglinge therewith, onely to make sporte,  
 Some thinges not warranted by any writt,  
 Which to gladd the hearers he woulde men to take  
 yt

This matter he abrevited into playes twenty-foure,  
 And every playe of the matter gave but a taste,  
 Leavinge for better learninge the scircumstance  
 to accomplishe;

For all his proceedinges maye appeare to be in  
 haste,

Yet all together unprofitable his labour he  
 did not waste;

For at this daye and ever he deserveth the fame  
 Which all monkes deserves, professinge that  
 name.

These storyes of the Testamente at this tyme,  
 you knowe,

In a common Englishe tongue never read nor  
 harde;

Yet thereof in these pagents to make open shewe,





This moonke and moonke was nothinge afreayde  
With feare of hanginge, breninge, or cuttinge  
off heade,

To sett out, that all maye disserne and see  
And parte good be lefte, beleewe you mee.

As in this citie divers yeares the have bene  
set out,

Soe at this tyme of Penticoste, called  
Whitsontyde,

Allthough to all the citie followe labour  
and coste,

Yet God guiving leave that tyme shall you,  
in playe,

For three dayes together, begynninge one  
Mondaye,

See these pagents played to the beste of  
theire skill;

Wher to supplie all wantes shalbe noe  
wantes of good will.

As all that shall moste welcome be,

Soe all that here them wee moste humble praye



Not to compare this matter or storie  
With the age or tyme wherein we presently staye,  
But in the tyme of ignorance, wherein we did  
straye;

Then doe I compare that this lande throughout  
Non had the like, nor the like dose sett out.

If the same be likeinge to the comens all,  
Then our desier is to satisfie, for that is  
all our game;

Yf noe matter or shewe therof speciall  
Doe not please, but misslike the most of the  
trayne,

Goe backe, I saye, to the firste tyme againe;  
Then shall you fynde the fyne witt at this  
day aboundinge,

At that day and that age had verye small beinge.

Condepne not our matter where grosse wordes  
you here,

Which ymporte at this day small sence or  
understandinge,

As some tyme postie lewtie, in good manner,





or in feare,  
 With such like, wilbe uttered in there speeches  
 speakeinge.

At this tyme those speeches carried good  
 likeinge,

Tho at this tyme you take them spoken at that  
 tyme;

As well matter and wordes, then, is all  
 well and fyne.

This worthy knight, Arnway, then mayor of  
 this citie,

This order toke, as declare to you I shall,  
 That by twentye-fower occupations, artes,  
 craftes, or misterie,

These pagentes shoulde be played, after  
 breeffe rehearsall;

For everye pagente a cariage to be provyded  
 withall;

In which sorte we porpose, this Whitsontyde,  
 Our pageantes into three partes to devyde.



1. Nowe, you worshippfull tanners, that custome  
olde

Worsh  
tanners.

The fall of Lucifer did set out,  
Some writers awarrante your matter, theirfore  
be boulde,  
Erstelye to playe the same to all the rowtte;  
And yf any therof stande in any doubte,  
Your authour his auther hath, your shewe let bee  
Good speech, fyne players, with apparrill  
comelye.

2. Of the drapers you the wealthy companye,  
The creation of the worlde, Adam and Eve,  
Accordinge to your wealth, set out wealthilye,  
And howe Cayne his brother Abell his life did  
bereave.

Drapers.

3. The good symple water-leaders and drawers of Deey,  
See that your arke in all poyntes be prepared;  
Of Noy and his children the wholl storye,  
And of the universall floude, by you shalbe  
played.

Water-  
leaders.  
~~Dr~~awers  
in Dee.





Barbers  
Wax  
chaund-  
lers.

4. The sacrificke that faythfull Abraham to  
his sonne should make,  
You, barbers and waxe chaundlers of  
aunciente tyme,  
In the fourth pageante with paines you doe  
take,  
In decente worte set out; the storie is ffine;  
The offeringe of Melchesedecke of breade and  
wine,  
And the preservation thereof, set in your  
playe,  
Suffer you not in any poynte the storye  
to take awaye.

Cappers.  
Linen  
drapers.

5. Cappers and lynn~~en~~ drapers, see that you  
fourth bringe,  
In well decked order, that worthy storie  
Of Balaam and his asse, and of Balacke  
the kinge;  
Make the asse to speake, and sett yt  
out livelye.



Wrightes. 6. Of Octavion the emperour, that coulde not  
Slaters.

well alowe

The prophesye of aunçient Sibell the sage,

You wrightes and sklaters, with good

players in shoue,

Lustelye bringe fourth your well decked carriage:

The beirth of Christe shall all see in that

stage:

Yf the Scriptures awarrant not of the

mydwyses reporte,

The authour telleth his authour, then take

it in sporte.

Painters. 7. The appearinge angell and starr upon Christes  
Glassiers.

beirth

To sheapeardes poore, of base and lowe degree,

You painters and glasiors decke out with

all meirth,

And see that Gloria in excelsis be songe

merelye.

Fewe wordes in that pageante makes meirth

truely,





For all that the alter had to stande uppon,  
Was glorie to God above, and peace on earth  
to man.

Merchants  
vintners.

8. And you, worthy marchantes vintners, that  
nowe have plenty of wine,  
Amplifye the storie of those wise kinges  
three,  
That through Herodes lande and realme,  
by the starre that did shine,  
Sought the sighte of the saviour that  
then borne shoulde bee.

9. And you, worshippfull mercers, though  
costely and fyne,  
Yee tryme up your cariage as custome  
ever was;  
Yet in a stable was he borne, that mighty  
kinge devyne,  
Poorely in a stable, betwixte an oxe and  
an asse.

Wor.  
mercers.

the first time the ship was in the harbor,  
the people of the town, and those of the  
country, all came to see it.

And when the ship was in the harbor, the  
people of the town, and those of the  
country, all came to see it.  
And when the ship was in the harbor, the  
people of the town, and those of the  
country, all came to see it.

And when the ship was in the harbor, the  
people of the town, and those of the  
country, all came to see it.  
And when the ship was in the harbor, the  
people of the town, and those of the  
country, all came to see it.

10. You, gouldesmythes and masons, make comely  
shewe,

Gold-  
smiths.

Howe Herode did rage at the retorne of  
those kinges,  
And how he slewe the small tender male  
babes,  
Beinge under two yeares of age.

11. You, smythes, honest men and of honest arte,  
Howe Christe amonge the docters in the  
temple did dispute,  
To set out in playe comely yt shalbe your  
parte,

Smiths.

Get mynstrills to that shewe, pipe, tabarte,  
and flute.

12. And nexte to this you, bowchers of this  
citie,

Buchers.

The storie of Sathan, that Christe would  
needes tempte,  
Set out as accostamablie have yee,  
The devill in his fethers all ragger and rente.





13. The death of Lazarus and his riseinge againe  
 You, of glovers the wholl occupation,  
 In pagente with players orderly, let yt not  
     be paine  
 Finely to advaunce after the beste fashion.

Glovers.

14. The storye howe that to Jerusalem our Saviour  
     toke the waye,  
 You, corvisors, that in nomber manye bee,  
 With your Jerusalem carriage shall set out in  
     playe;  
 A commendable true storye and worthy memorye.

Corvisors

Bakers.

15. And howe Christe, our Savyour, at his last  
     super  
 Gave his bodye and his bloude for redemption  
     of us all,  
 You, bakers, see that with the same wordes  
     you utter,  
 As Christ hym selfe spake them, to be a  
     memoriall  
 Of that death and passion which in playe  
     ensue after shall.

1. The first of these is the fact that the  
 second of these is the fact that the  
 third of these is the fact that the  
 fourth of these is the fact that the  
 fifth of these is the fact that the

2. The second of these is the fact that the  
 third of these is the fact that the  
 fourth of these is the fact that the  
 fifth of these is the fact that the  
 sixth of these is the fact that the

3. The third of these is the fact that the  
 fourth of these is the fact that the  
 fifth of these is the fact that the  
 sixth of these is the fact that the  
 seventh of these is the fact that the  
 eighth of these is the fact that the  
 ninth of these is the fact that the  
 tenth of these is the fact that the

The worste of these stories doe not fall to  
your parte;

Therefore, caste god looves abroad with a  
cheerfull harte.

Of whom with such good teaching we may

fflechers. 16. You, ffletchers, boweyers, cowpers, stringers,  
Bowyers.  
Coopers. and iremongers,

See soberly ye make of Christes doleful death,  
His scourginge, his whippinge, his bloude  
shedde and passion,

And all the paines he suffered till the last  
of his breath:

Lordinges, in this storye consisteth our  
cheeffe ffayth.

Cookes. 17. As our beleefe is that Christe, after his  
passion,

Descended into hell, but what he did in  
that place,

Though our authour sett fourth after his  
opinion,

Yet creditt you the best learned, those  
doth he not disgrace:

THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND THE LORDS

THE HOUSE OF LORDS

THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND THE LORDS

THE HOUSE OF LORDS

THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND THE LORDS

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THE HOUSE OF LORDS

THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND THE LORDS

THE HOUSE OF LORDS



We wishe that of all sortes the beste you  
ymbrace;

You, cookes, with your carriage see that  
you doe well

In pagente sett out the harrowinge of hell.

Skinners. 18. The skynners before you after shall playe  
The storye of the resurrection,  
Howe Christe from death rose the thirde  
daye,  
Not altered in many poyntes from the  
olde fashion.

Sadlers.  
ffusterers. 19. The saddlers and ffusterers shoulde in  
theire pagent declare  
The appearances of Christe his travayle to  
Emaus,  
His often speach to the women and to his  
disciples deere,  
To make his riseinge againe to all the  
worlde notorious.

The whole of it is a very fine  
piece of work, and it is  
very well done, with the  
best of materials.  
It is a very fine piece of work,  
and it is very well done.

The whole of it is a very fine  
piece of work, and it is  
very well done, with the  
best of materials.  
It is a very fine piece of work,  
and it is very well done.

The whole of it is a very fine  
piece of work, and it is  
very well done, with the  
best of materials.  
It is a very fine piece of work,  
and it is very well done.

Taylours. 20. Then see that you, telers, with cariage  
decente

The storye of the Assention formablye  
doe frame,

Whereby that gloryous body in cloudes most  
orient

Is taken up to the heavens with perpetuall  
fame.

21. This of the olde and newe Testament to ende  
all the storye

ffish-  
mongers.

Which our aulter meaneth at this tyme to  
have in pleaye,

You, ffishmongers, to the peagent of the  
holy ghoste well see,

That in good order yt be donne, as hath  
bene all waye.

22. And after those ended yt doth not the  
story staye,

Shermen.

But by prophettes sheweth fourth howe  
Antichrist should rise;

1910. The first year of the new century.

1910.

The first year of the new century.

1910.

The first year of the new century.

1910.

The first year of the new century.

1910.

1910. The first year of the new century.

1910.

The first year of the new century.

1910.

The first year of the new century.

1910.

The first year of the new century.

1910.

1910. The first year of the new century.

1910.

The first year of the new century.

1910.



Which you, shermen, sett out in moste  
comely wise.

23. And then you, diers and hewsters, Antechrist  
bringe out,  
First with his docter that godlye maye  
expounde,  
Who be Antechristes the worlde rounde aboute,  
And Enocke and hely persons walkinge one  
grounde,  
In partes set you well out the wicked to  
confounde;  
Which beinge understood Christes worde  
for to bee,  
Confoundeth all Antechristes and sextes  
of that degree.

Diers.  
Hewsters

24. The cominge of Christe to geve eternal  
judgement,  
You, weavers, last of all your parte  
is for to playe;  
Domesday we call yt, when the Omnipotente

Wavers.

When you, however, call out in haste

Small birds.

So, you may say, that's the way to go.

But, no.

It's not the way to go.

It's not.

It's not the way to go.

It's not the way to go.

It's not.

It's not the way to go.

It's not.

It's not the way to go.

It's not.

It's not the way to go.

It's not.

So, you may say, that's the way to go.

It's not.

It's not the way to go.

It's not.

It's not the way to go.

Shall make ende of this worlde by sentence,

I saye.

One his righte hande to stande God grante

us that daye,

And to have that sweete worde in melodye,

'Come hether, come hether, venite benedicti.'

To which rest of wayes and selestiall

habitation

Grante us free passage, that all together wee,

Accompanied with angells and endless delectation,

Maye contynually laude God and prayse that

kinge of glorye.

...of the ... ..

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Prologue of the Morality Play, EVERYMAN, taken from  
the volume of English Miracle Plays, Moralities and  
Interludes by Pollard. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1904.

42

(Messenger)

I pray you all gyve your audyence

And here this mater with reverence,

By fygure a morall playe.

The somonyng of Everyman called it is,

That of our lyves and endyng shewes

How transytory we be all daye.

This matter is wonders precyous,

But the entent of it is more gracyous

And swete to bere awaye.

The story sayth: Man in the begynnyng

Loke well and take good heed to the endyng,

Be you never so gay,

Ye thynke synne in the begynnyng full swete,

Whiche in the ende causeth the soule to wepe,

Whan the body lyeth in claye.

Here shall you se how Felawshyp, and Jolyte,

Bothe Strengthe, Pleasure and Beaute,

Wyll fade from the as floure in maye.

For ye shall here how our heven kynge

Calleth Everyman to a general rekenyng.

Gyve audyence and here what he doth saye.



Prologue to THE GENEROUS IMPOSTOR, spoken by Mr  
Palmer (To the Audience) From The New Spouter's  
Companion, collected by Mr. Palmer.' London,

43

"Prologues are altered since that Gothic day  
When only hungry play-wrights wrote -for pay.  
Then while the Bard-poor miserable sinner!  
Trembled behind-uncertain of his dinner -  
Forth came in black - with solemn step - and slow  
The actor to unfold the tale of Woe.  
But in these days, when e'en the titled dame  
Glows with the passion of dramatic fame \* \* \*  
In these bright days - this literary age,  
When 'tis the taste - the very thing - the rage  
To pen some lively morceau for the stage:  
When belles write comedies and beaux have wit,  
The Prologue too the sprightly ton must hit."





From The New Spouter's Companion, collected by

Mr. Palmer.

London,

"What does it mean? what can it be?

A little patience - and you'll see.

Behold, to keep your minds uncertain,

Between the scene and you this curtain!

So writers hide their plots, no doubt,

To please the more when all comes out!

Of old the Prologue told the story,

And laid the whole affair before ye:

Came forth in simple phrase to say,

" ' Fore the beginning of the play

I, hapless Polydore, was found

By fishermen, or others, drowned!

Or- I, a gentleman, did wed

The lady I would never bed,

Great Agamemnon's royal daughter

Who's coming hither to draw water."

Thus gave at once the bards of Greece

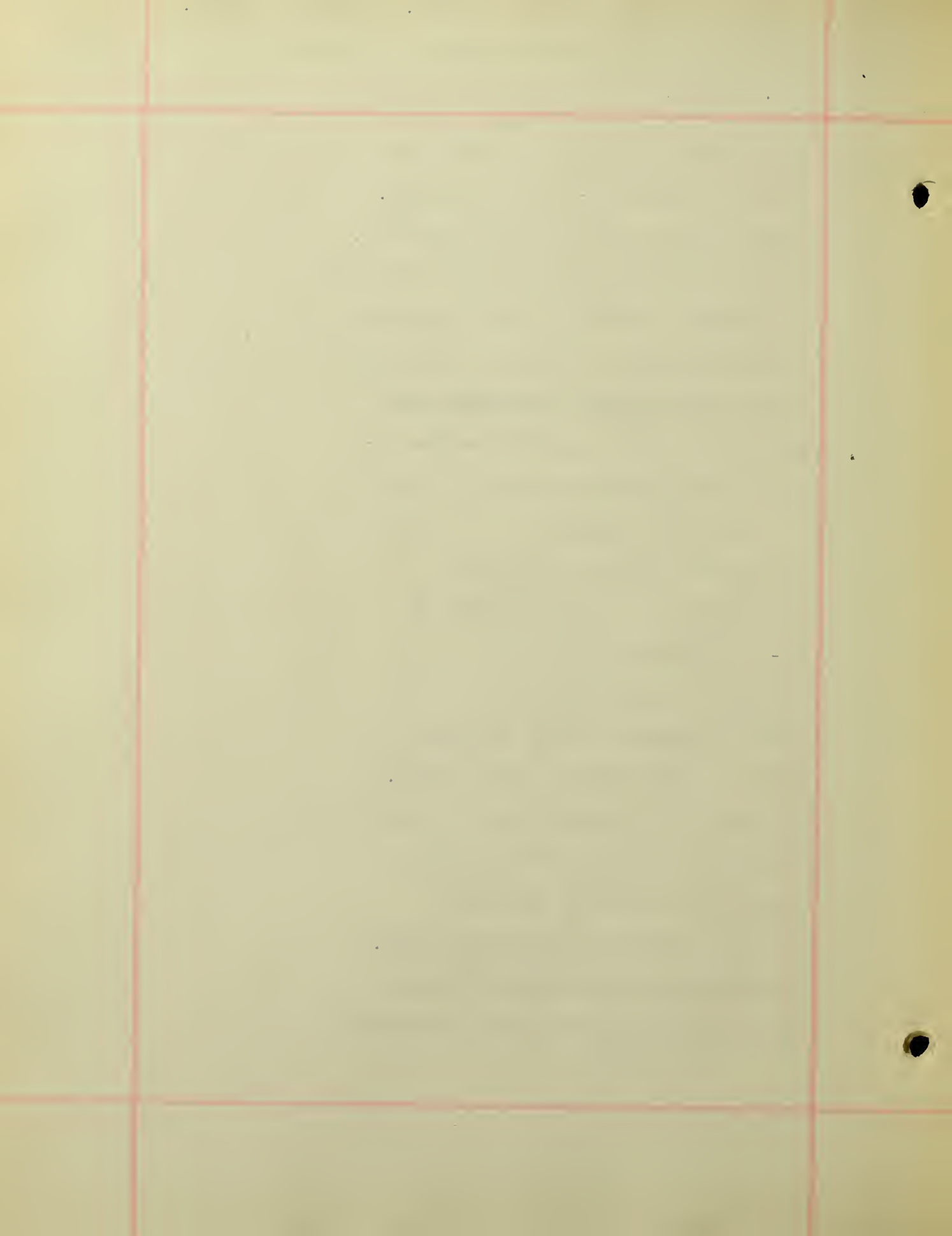
The cream and marrow of the piece;

Asking no trouble of your own

To skim the milk or crack the bone.

The poets now take different ways,

"E'en let them find it out for bays!"



Two households, both alike in dignity,  
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,  
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,  
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.  
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes  
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life,  
Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows  
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.  
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,  
And the continuance of their parents' rage,  
Which but their children's end, nought could remove,  
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;  
The which if you with patient ears attend,  
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

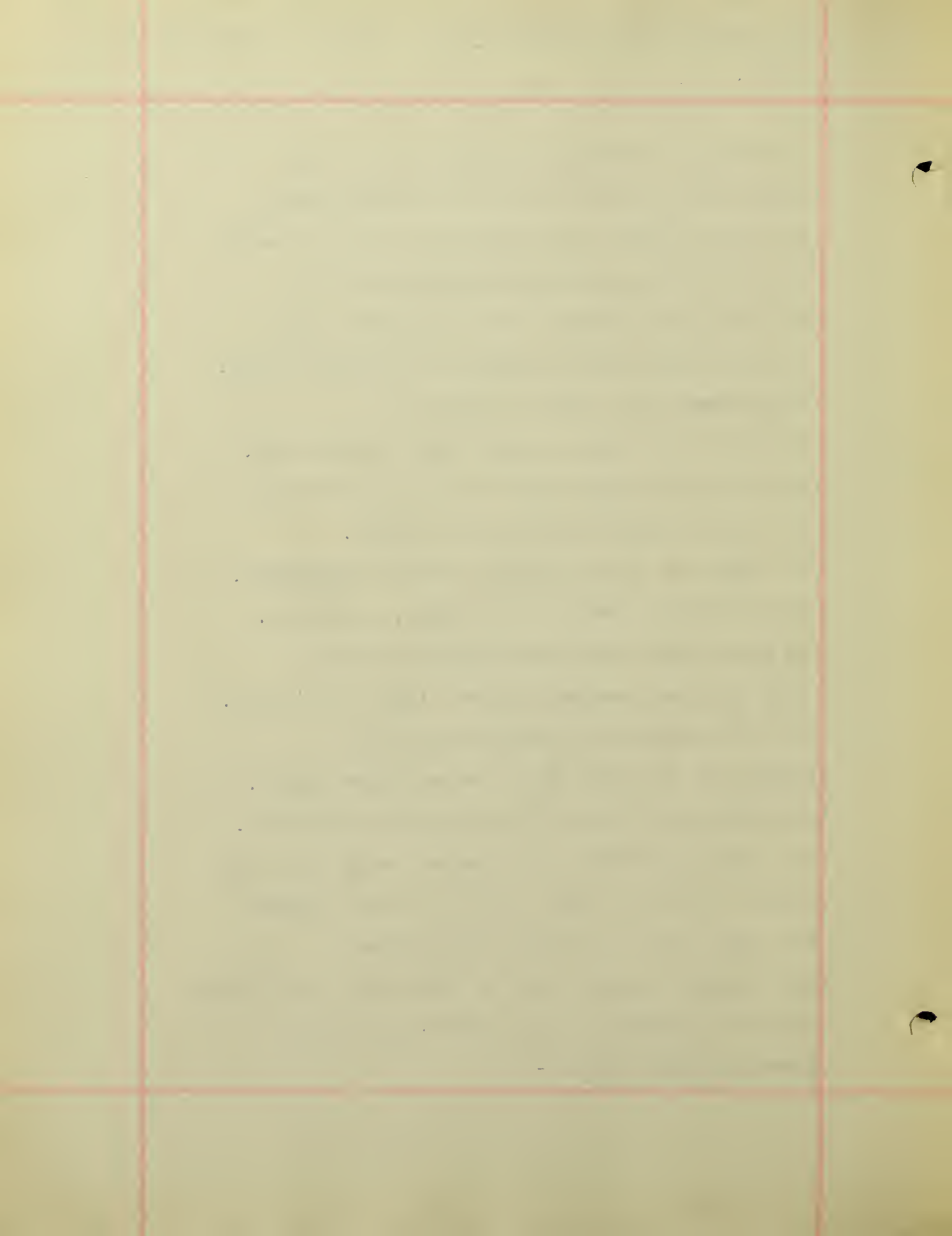




Prologue of THE RIVAL LADIES by John Dryden. From  
his Works revised by Saintsbury; Paterson, Edinburgh,  
1882 .

46

" 'Tis much desired, you judges of the town  
Would pass a vote to put all prologues down;  
For who can show me, since they first were writ,  
They e'er converted one hard-hearted wit?  
Yet the world's mended well; in former days  
Good prologues were as scarce as now good plays.  
For the reforming poets of our age,  
In this first charge, spend their poetic rage;  
Expect no more when once the prologue's done;  
The wit is ended ere the play's begun.  
You now have habits, dances, scenes, and rhymes;  
High language often; ay, and sense, sometimes.  
As for a clear contrivance, doubt it not ;  
They blow out candles to give light to th' plot.  
And for surprise, two bloody-minded men  
Fight till they die, then rise and dance again.  
Such deep intrigues you're welcome to this day.  
But blame yourselves, not him who writ the play;  
Though his plot's dull, as can be well desired,  
Wit stiff as any you have e'er admired:  
He's bound to please, not to write well; and knows,  
There is a mode in plays as well as clothes;  
Therefore, kind judges -



2 - - - Hold; would you admit

For judges all you see within the pit?

1. Whom would he then except, or on what score?

2. All, who (like him) have writ ill plays before;  
For they, like thieves condemned, are hangmen made,  
To execute the members of their trade.

All that are writing now he would disown,

But then he must except - even all the town;

All choleric, losing gamesters, who, in spite,

Will damn to-day, because they lost last night;

All servants, whom their mistress' scorn upbraids;

All maudlin lovers, and all slighted maids;

All, who are out of humour, or severe;

All, that want wit, or hope to find it here.





Kismet

Dawn

Before The Curtain

A large arch of Arabian design, with small  
doors right and left, frames in the whole  
picture.

The Man enters from the door of his house  
left, seats himself and sings:

Lo! Still the stars of latter night are spread!  
Yet hath sleep stolen from my lonely bed.  
So will I sit me on my rooftop's height,  
To cool my sadness till the dawning red.

The Woman enters from her house right,  
seats herself and sings:

Yehh! Still the moon hangs on the lips of night  
To mock my solitude with love-delight.  
O heavy hour of a longing breast,  
Thy weight will crush me ere the break of light!



The Man

Wah! That some song might soothe my soul  
 oppress'd.  
 Some ancient melody of days more bless'd.

The Woman

Awah, that some strange tale of long ago  
 Might by its magic bring my bosom rest!

Both

O Thou, Bestower of all things, bestow  
 This benediction on Thy servant low!

The Story Teller enters through the  
 curtains and speaks:

Story Teller. Praise be to Allah, the King of all  
 Kings, the Creator of all things! Who like to a  
 carpet hath spread, the Earth to our tread. And  
 even as a tent, set up the firmament, overhead.  
 And on Mohammed, his Propht among men, the blessing  
 of blessings again and again, Amen. (He sits.)





But afterwards. Verily the works and words of those gone before us have become examples and admonitions to the men of our later day. And of such a kind is the story of Hajj, the beggar, who lived his life in this our peaceful city of Baghdad, one thousand years and one year ago. Now it is the tale of his day of the days that I will relate unto you, O auspicious listeners. Do ye take heed therein of the lesson taught by Fate, which the poets call Kismet. And mark well the chances and changes of time foredoomed to mortal man: lifting him now high, now sinking low, even as the bucket in the well. (He rises) But Allah alone is all knowing.

He withdraws.

The Man and Woman rise and sing:

I hearken with my heart upon the ground,  
Nor from my breathless lips shall rise a sound:--  
Awake, O day of days, and run thy round!

Then they turn and re-enter their respective houses. They have not seen each other.



51  
Prologue to THE LIFE OF MAN by Leonid Andreyeff,  
translated by C.H.Meador and F.N.Scott published  
by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1915.

A Being in Grey called He speaks of the life of Man.

The scene resembles a large, rectangular, perfectly empty room, without doors or windows. Every thing in it is grey and misty and of uniform colour: grey walls, grey ceiling, grey floor. From an invisible source comes a feeble, diffused light, which, also grey, is monotonous, uniform, and unreal, casting neither shadows nor spots of light. The Being in Grey comes gradually into view against the back-ground of the wall, with which he has been merged. He wears a broad, shapeless, grey robe which vaguely outlines the contours of a large body. Upon his head there is a heavy grey scarf which throws a dark shadow over the upper part of his face. The eyes are not visible. That which is visible- the cheek-bones, nose, and sharp chin - is massive and solid, as if hewn from grey stone. The lips are firmly compressed. Slightly raising his head, he begins to speak in a firm, cold voice, calm and passionless, like a hired lector reading with severe indifference the Book of Fate:

"Look and listen, ye who have come hither for





mirth and laughter. Lo, there will pass before you all the life of Man, with its dark beginning and its dark end. Hitherto non-existent, mysteriously hidden in infinite time, without thought or feeling, utterly unknown, he will mysteriously break through the barriers of non-existence and with a cry will announce the beginning of his brief life. In the night of non-existence will blaze up a candle, lighted by an unseen hand. This is the life of Man. Behold its flame. It is the life of Man.

"After birth he will take on the image and the name of man, and in all respects he will be like other people who already live on the earth, and their cruel fate will be his fate, and his cruel fate will be the fate of all people. Irresistibly dragged on by time, he will tread inevitably all the steps of human life, upward to its climax and downward to its end. Limited in vision, he will not see the step to which his unsure foot is already raising him. Limited in knowledge he will never know what the coming day or hour or moment is bringing to him. And in his blind ignorance worn by apprehension, harassed by hopes and fears, he



will complete submissively the iron round of destiny.

"Behold him, a happy youth. See how brightly the candle burns. The icy wind blowing from infinite space puffs and whirls about, causing the flame to flutter. The candle, however, burns clearly and brightly, though the wax is melting, consumed by the fire. The wax is melting.

"Lo, he is happy husband and father. Yet look! How dim and strange the candle glimmers, as if the flame were a yellowing leaf, as if the flame were shivering and shielding itself from the cold. For the wax is melting, consumed by the fire. The wax is melting.

"Lo, now he is an old man, feeble and sick. The path of life has been trodden to its end and now the dark abyss has taken its place, but he still presses on with tottering foot. The livid flame, bending toward the earth, flutters feebly, trembles and sinks, trembles and sinks, and quietly goes out.

"Thus Man will die. Coming from the night he will return to the night. Bereft of thought, bereft of feeling, unknown to all, he will perish utterly, vanishing without trace into infinity. And I, whom men call



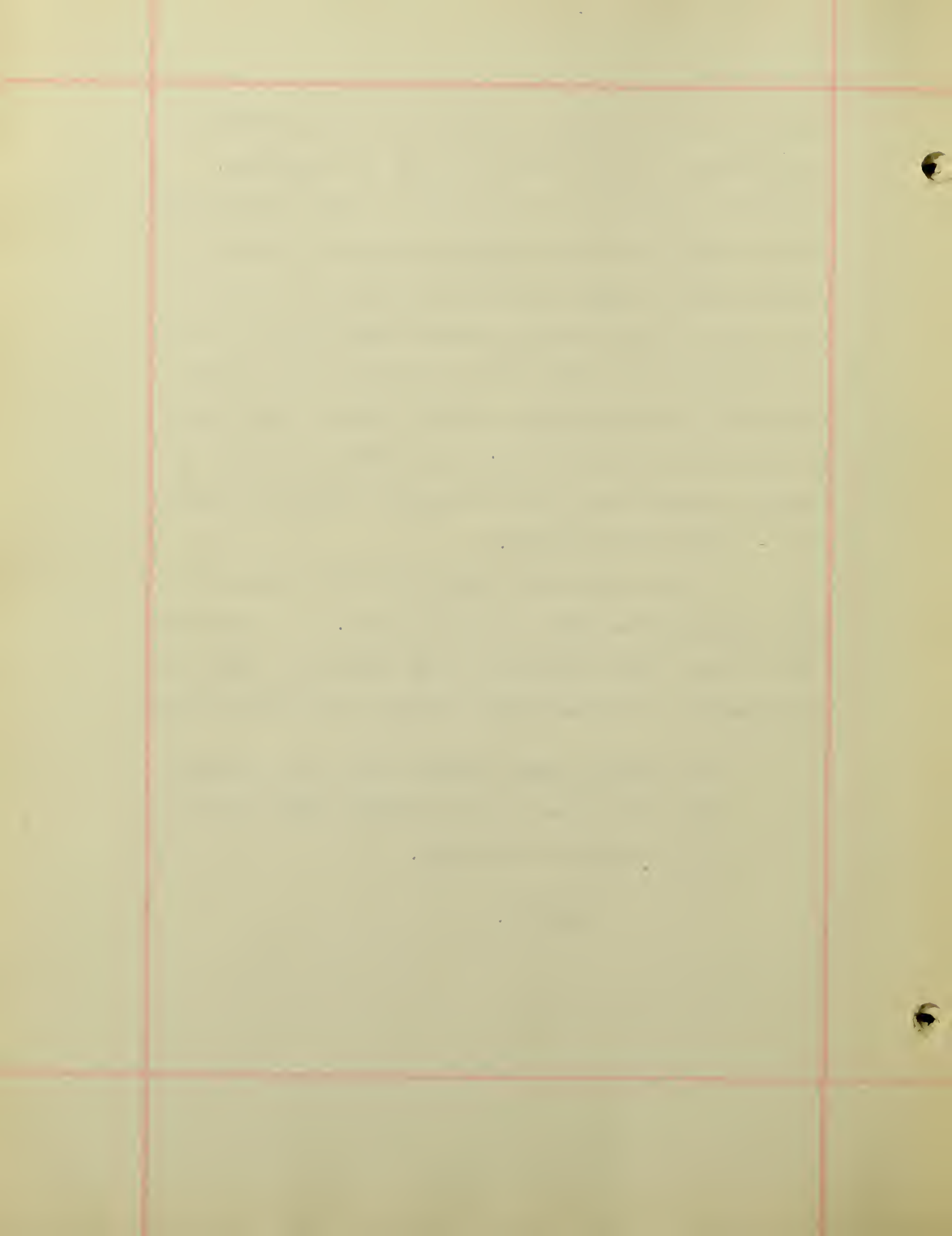


He, will be the faithful companion of Man throughout all the days of his life and in all his pathways. Unseen by Man and his companions, I shall unfailingly be near him both in his waking and in his sleeping hours; when he prays and when he curses; in hours of joy when his free and bold spirit soars high; in hours of depressoin and sorrow whe his weary soul is overshadowed by deatlike gloom and the blood in the heart is chilled; in hours of victory and defeat; in hours of heroic struggle with the inevitable I shall be with him - I shall be with him.

" And ye who have come hither for mirth, ye who are doomed to die, look and listen. Lo, the swiftly flowing life of Man will pass before you, with its sorrows and its joys, like a far-off, thin reflection."

The Being in Grey ceases, and in the silence the light goes out and darkness envelops him and the grey, empty room.

Curtain.



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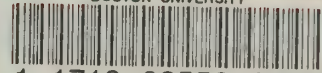
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